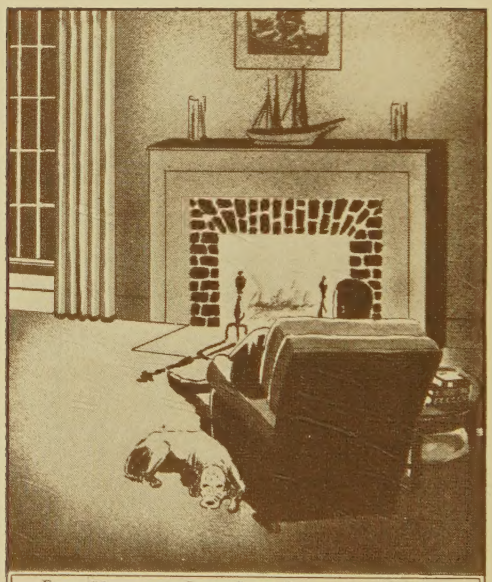

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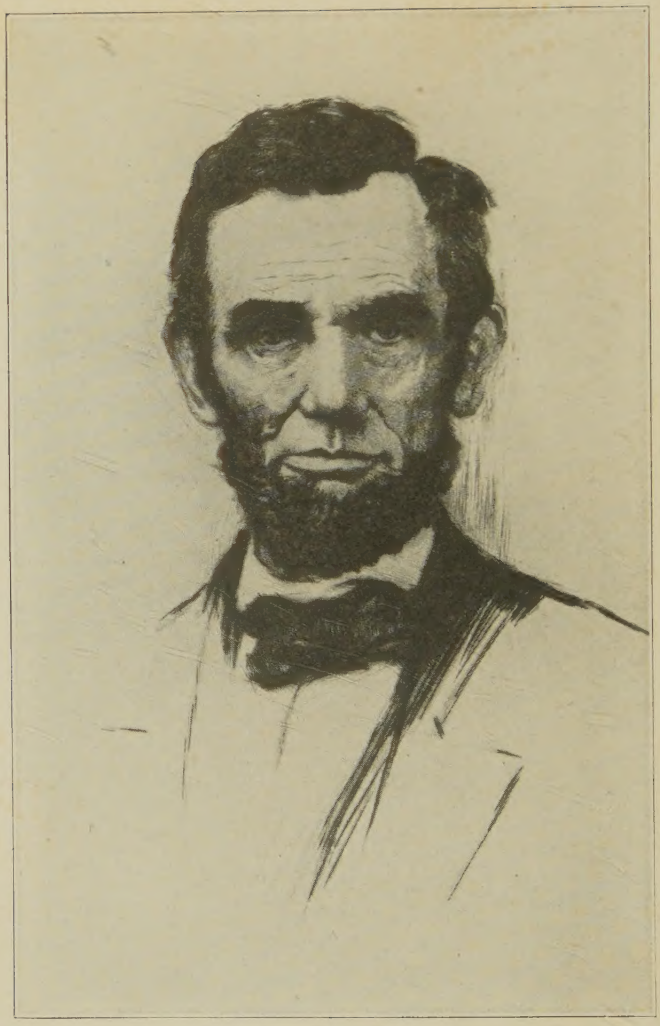

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AS A MAN OF LETTERS

BY

LUTHER EMERSON ROBINSON, A.M.

Professor of English, Monmouth College
Author of "A History of Illinois"

"There is but one way in which you can take mere literature as an education, and that is directly, at first hand."—*Woodrow Wilson.*

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TO
A. D. R.

PREFACE

Any attempt to set down with some exactness a definition of a man of letters would doubtless give rise to considerable diversity of opinion. Such a result would, however, give value to the attempt. And yet, the class of men of letters is fairly distinct and understood. Time comes nearest judging well the virtues of those who write as well as of those who interpret what has been written. Whatever time holds out as thoughtful and beautiful and perpetually interesting among the writings of men and women is likely to be esteemed by the judgment of all as literature.

John Morley places Burke among men of letters. He gives especial distinction to Burke's speech on conciliation with America. Something that Morley says of Burke applies with aptness to Lincoln:

Out-arguing is not perhaps the right word for most of Burke's performances. He is at heart thinking more of the subject itself, than of those on whom it was his apparent business to impress a particular view of it. He surrenders himself wholly to the matter,

and follows up, though with a strong and close tread, all the excursions to which it may give rise in an elastic intelligence—"motion," as De Quincey says, "propagating motion, and throwing off life." But then this exuberant way of thinking, this willingness to let the subject lead, is less apt in public discourse than it is in literature, and from this comes the literary quality of Burke's speeches.

In debate, Burke surpasses Lincoln in an "exuberant way of thinking." He is more sweeping in range of imagination, and in greater degree affects the scholarly and rhetorical form of statement. In matters of public policy, Lincoln's outstanding principle of conduct was like that held by Burke: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom."

Both men were face to face with a great national issue. Burke remains to us the greatest spokesman of the problem before him. Lincoln was not only the most important spokesman of his, but he was a powerful public leader and administrator as well. Burke wearied his audience; Lincoln captured his. Burke's prose maintains a Miltonic elevation and seriousness to the end of its long flight. Lincoln was more direct and economical in speech. He is as sure as Burke in his "willingness to let the subject

lead." But he could not, or would not, set for himself the stately pace that lured the talents of the other. In the *fine art* of English prose, Lincoln's contribution, though not large, belongs to the best in literature.

If we broaden our conception of English prose literature somewhat, we shall not find it necessary to limit Lincoln's contribution of importance to his masterpieces. We shall be able to assent to the estimate of the London *Spectator,* as it spoke of this subject:

Mr. Lincoln did not get his ability to handle prose through his gift of speech. That these are separate, though coördinate, faculties, is a matter beyond dispute, for many of the great orators of the world have proved themselves exceedingly inefficient in the matter of deliberate composition. Mr. Lincoln enjoyed both gifts. His letters, dispatches, memoranda, and written addresses are even better than his speeches; and in speaking thus of Mr. Lincoln's prose, we are not thinking merely of certain pieces of inspired rhetoric. . . . Whatever the subject he has in hand, whether it be bold or impassioned, business-like or pathetic, we feel that we "lose no particle of the exact, characteristic, extreme expression" of the thing written about. We have it all, not merely a part. Every line shows that the writer is master of his materials; that he guides

his words, never his words him. That is indeed the predominant note throughout all Mr. Lincoln's work.

The perspective of the years adds mightily to the meaning of the man whose personality and ideals were so vital to the perpetuity of America as the home of liberty,—of liberty for the New World and the Old. No explanation is needed for the unflagging interest in his life and work. It is because so many of his great utterances are as timely to-day as when they were first made.

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

. . . . . A Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven.
—*Wordsworth.*

Abraham Lincoln's career is of perennial interest to the world because it represents a high personal achievement accomplished under severe difficulties. Such an achievement, entirely possible in a democracy, excites admiration among every generation of men. It contains so many points of human interest that a large and growing literature has come into existence to tell the story of his struggles with poverty, his untoward opportunities for acquiring an education, to describe his personality, to interpret his political views and policies, and to exhibit his "genius for expression." So significant is his position in history that we preserve every scrap of his writing, trivial or important, and perpetuate every tale or tradition that promises to add to our memorial of the man and his performance. For many, his utterances on public questions have become as touchstones of political wisdom. There are rea-

sons also for believing that, had the circumstances of his life fallen in more favorable ways, he might have become as distinguished in the field of letters as he was eminent in statesmanship. These reasons are to be found within that large body of letters, addresses, and state papers which he has left as a legacy from the wealth of exertion and clear thinking which fell to his experience.

We know Lincoln's biography intimately enough to discover that his mental life was a persistent and progressive unfolding in the direction of genuine culture. He was ambitious to acquire knowledge. He laid hold of even meagre occasions to widen his horizons. Apparently he was equally eager to lead a life of action. At the age of twenty-one he had successfully piloted his father's family from Indiana to their new homestead in Illinois. Within two years after this change of residence he became a candidate for election to the Illinois legislature from Sangamon county. In the address which he issued to the voters of the county in March, 1832, we may find a clear hint of the type of mind and aspiration which distinguished his maturity.[1] Although up to this time he had enjoyed the privilege of less than a year's training in the elementary school and had

1 Page 219, Appendix.

studied English grammar only "imperfectly," the sentences and ideas of this first political pronouncement arrest our attention. One is led to wonder how large a percentage of our legislators to-day would be able to write paragraphs at once as coherent and thoughtful as are contained in Lincoln's "handbill" written when he was twenty-three.

This earliest political document of Lincoln's, with its beginning of deliberate thinking and good style, suggests also a negative characteristic of the man. It contains a good-natured confession of humility springing from that sense of his lowly origin which seems to have survived throughout his life in much that he wrote and spoke. This characteristic was coupled with a certain infection of pioneerism which, while enhancing the popular love of Lincoln, left its stamp upon his humor, touched with mediocrity many of his figures of speech, and made very commonplace language suffice for much of his correspondence involving professional or political routine. Hence, a large part of his writings do not share the literary distinction of another part for the reason that Lincoln's psychology contained leanings that were as ordinary as his moments of uprush were beautiful and ideal. A touch of rusticity, contributed by his birth and environment, is to be found

in much of his written work, but it enriched his personality and deepened his sympathy and imagination. But when his mind was moved to its highest points of feeling and sincerity, his expression took on a purity, an elegance, and an insight, which gave it the qualities of literature.

If the last paragraph of the "handbill" of 1832 contains a glimpse of that negative influence which Lincoln did so much to overcome, but never wholly escaped, the platform upon which he became for the third time a candidate for the legislature, in 1836, still better illustrates the point. In the interim he had studied English grammar, had made some progress in the study of law, had read newspapers and had committed to memory certain poems which appealed to him. He had been deputy surveyor, and had already had one term's experience in the legislature. This platform was written for publication, yet has the form and language of a pioneer to pioneers. It is, however, concerned exclusively with the writer's political convictions, and contains Lincoln's only known declaration in support of woman suffrage. This declaration is not expressed in a separate paragraph or with any formality, but is abruptly tacked on to the end of a sentence.[1] In

1 Page 289, Appendix.

less than two weeks after the publication of this plebeian utterance, Lincoln penned a letter to one Colonel Robert Allen—who had intimated a knowledge of facts damaging to Lincoln's personal character—which leaves nothing to be desired in dignity or choice of words.[1] The sentences are well constructed and the style and language are unequivocal and perspicuous.

Throughout Lincoln's works the reader traces these opposite marks of style—the homebred and the finished. The intellectual elements entering into his mind's growth during the three years he was postmaster at New Salem (1833-1836) were important. During his brief experience as storekeeper he read Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England" and followed this up with other law books borrowed from Springfield friends. He had been a diligent reader of newspapers, an opportunity favored by his incumbency as postmaster. His acquaintance during this time with the Rogers family, who had come to Illinois from Cooperstown, N. Y., in 1818, and at whose place, a few miles from New Salem, another postoffice was established, furnished Lincoln with new cultural interests. His trips to take mail from New Salem to the

1 Page 290, Appendix.

Rogers office gave him access not only to additional newspapers, but to the "chest of books" which the Rogers family had brought with them to Illinois.[1] Newspapers remained with Lincoln an important source of intellectual stimulus. From them he obtained political information and comment, reports of lectures, poems, and foreign intelligence.

Lincoln's studious reading of newspapers and such books as came within his reach constantly enlarged as he came into wider contact with people. This wider contact was afforded by his attendance upon the legislature at Springfield, where he made industrious use of the new State library, chiefly to enhance his knowledge of the law, preparatory to his future profession. His biographers agree that Lincoln had a highly retentive memory. There is evidence to show that both upon the stump and in private conversation, he was acquiring a vocabulary of ever-increasing range and accuracy. He had become a careful and ambitious student of words, and sought rather than avoided the stimulus of a crowd in the practice of speech-making. As a young man at Gentryville, Indiana, and later at New Salem, he had the reputation of knowing more as a result

1 Rankin, "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, pp. 136-139.

of reading than anyone else in the neighborhood.[1] It was during his New Salem experience that his courtship of Anne Rutledge occurred. Apparently he encouraged her own intellectual aspirations, for at this time their mutual friend, Arminda Rogers, tutored Miss Rutledge in Kirkham's grammar, Blair's rhetoric, and other elementary subjects, as a foundation for her admission to a young women's academy at Jacksonville.[2] Anne Rutledge's death in 1835 destroyed their cherished hopes. Lincoln's recovery from a severe illness was followed by two years of assiduous study during the intervals between legislative and other employments concerned with his livelihood.

The year 1837, while he was still a member of the legislature, marks an eventful stage in Lincoln's career. In this year he moved to Springfield, which he had been influential in having made the capital of the State. He gained admission to the Springfield bar, and entered into partnership with John T. Stewart, a lawyer of ability and experience, whom Lincoln met in the legislature, and from whom he had borrowed books and received encouragement in the prosecution of his legal studies. It is not pos-

1 Browne, "Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln," pp. 26, 27.
2 Rankin, ibid., p. 68.

sible, up to this time, to specify just what books had entered into Lincoln's cultural reading. There is evidence that this material included the English Bible, certain of Shakespeare's plays, "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," Weems's Washington, Statutes of Indiana, a history of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.[1] Just what knowledge he had of poetry and of fiction is indefinite. He was familiar with current political parties and issues, both State and national, and had arrived at settled convictions upon matters of public interest. He had already exhibited the *elan* of a politician and had ambitions looking toward the future. During this year he made a well-considered speech before the legislature on the State bank issue, which a capable student of Lincoln regards as "an able argument, logical, convincing, and expressed in the best English."[2] The speech is indeed expressed in excellent English, and shows a studious grasp of the subject discussed.

1 Herndon and Weik, I:37-45. Herndon speaks of Webster's Spelling Book and the American Speller, Pike's Arithmetic, Murray's English Reader, and Æsop's Fables as among Lincoln's school books in Indiana. He quotes John Hanks on Abe's devotion to reading, reproduces specimens of his juvenile verse and mentions two prose compositions, one on the "American Government" and another on "Temperance." Arnold, in his "Abraham Lincoln," includes Burns's poems in his early reading, p. 21.

2 Richards, "Abraham Lincoln, the Lawyer-Statesman," pp. 4, 5.

Lincoln was now a man of advancing reputation in the State, recognized as a resourceful debater and as a man of integrity and ideals. On January 27 of this same year, he gave before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield a written address on the "Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions." The language of this address as a whole is over-rhetorical, as might be expected from a young man ambitious as an orator, self-instructed in the art of expression, and still under the spell of frontier standards. But the address has the substance of high ideals and moral convictions as well as reflection. It contains the following quotable passage on law enforcement:

Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of "seventy-six" did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and the Laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor; let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every

American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.

This address, instinct with noble feeling and sincerity, foreshadows the deep devotion to duty and the natural refinement of spirit which Lincoln, under the impress of experience, so often exhibited. It is prophetic of the high seriousness and simplicity which gradually matured toward the faultless diction in which he conceived the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural.

The student of Lincoln's works is sometimes tempted to ascribe his command of good English to genius.[1] He does indeed appear to have had some native gift of style. There is a letter of Lincoln's, dated April 1, 1838, to Mrs. O. H. Browning, anent his courtship of Mary Owen and their contemplated marriage.[2] The story is familiar to readers of Lincoln's biography, but it is told in this letter with a

1 Compare C. W. Eliot, in "The New Definition of an Educated Man."

2 Page 291, Appendix.

freedom and elegance of diction which suggests the artist in narration. As a composition the piece engages greater interest with the re-reading. It betrays a certain Addisonian acumen for words that goes far to persuade one that the writer held within his endowments the possibility of a successful essayist. The informal type of expression is lighted up with delicacy of humor and a touch of literary allusion. The lady in question, when he had first seen her, was "over-size," but now had grown "a fair match for Falstaff." Although he had misgivings about his affection for her, he determined he would make no concession to dishonor, but would stand "firm as the surge-repelling rock."[1]

1 For a ludicrously puritanic estimate of the letter to Mrs. Browning, see Lamon's Life of Lincoln, p. 181. Herndon takes a more cheerful view of it, p. 156 ff.

CHAPTER II

INTIMATIONS OF A PUBLIC CAREER

A good man, through obscurest aspiration,
Has still an instinct of the one true way.
—*Goethe*

The chief art of learning, as Locke has observed, is to attempt but little at a time. The widest excursions of the mind are made by short flights frequently repeated; the most lofty fabrics of science are formed by the continued accumulation of single propositions.—*Johnson.*

In the year 1839, Lincoln, in company with E. D. Baker and two other Whigs of local repute, engaged in a public debate in Springfield against Stephen A. Douglas and three other Democrats, on the relative merits of the Independent Treasury and the National Bank. Aside from being Mr. Lincoln's first public appearance against Douglas—an early study for the great debate nearly twenty years in the future—his speech on this occasion contains abundant evidence of his intimate acquaintance with public documents and his capacity to gather and assemble details of fact. There is a careful and convincing arrangement of the materials of his argument, and a competent knowledge of the Con-

stitution and contemporary history. On its argumentative side, this speech is a notable augury of the Peoria speech of 1854, also in reply to Douglas. Its closing paragraphs, however, contain examples of those antithetical aspects of his style to which reference has been made. In his rebuttal of Mr. Lamborn, one of his Democratic opponents, Lincoln uses a style that in the main is balanced and restrained. His speech closes, however, with a climax much too florid for impressive discussion.

This debate is important in an effort to trace the development of Lincoln's power of thought and his command of an adequate expression. It exhibits his two-fold capacity for matter-of-fact reasoning from things well known and his strength of native fancy and feeling. These could soar when touched by the deeper aspects of the subject or the occasion. They disclose the presence of a color-realm in his soul which, upon occasion, could clothe his convictions in the raiment of beautiful and moving words. His sense for the practical made him a wise and helpful counsellor. This side of his mind is revealed in much that he wrote, but nowhere better than in his letter to Herndon, July 10, 1848, on the way for a young man to rise in the world. The letter of June 22, also to Herndon, advised the

formation among the young men of his acquaintance of a "Rough and Ready" club, for pastime and the improvement of the "intellectual faculties." [1] It embodies a touch of political astuteness as well as sympathy for "the shrewd, wild boys about town" in need of incentives to improvement. How succinct in statement and worldly wisdom are the two letters to his step-brother, John D. Johnston, in 1851, on thriftlessness! [2] They remind one of the home-bred sense of Franklin, in his character of Poor Richard, who says:

> I never saw an oft-removed Tree,
> Nor yet an oft-removed Family,
> That throve so well as those that settled be.

That Lincoln possessed something of the essayist's bent of mind is not difficult to believe. He was accustomed to generalize upon what he observed and knew. The few fragments he has left us as notes for a law lecture [3] and for a popular lecture on Niagara Falls, as well as his observations on the nature and objects of government, imply that at times he sought escape from the limitations of his profession. They reveal a mind of a contemplative cast. There is little indication that he veered toward

1 Page 295, Appendix. 2 Pages 296-298, Appendix.
3 Page 330, Appendix.

speculative thinking. He concerned himself by choice with concrete interests rather than with matters of hypothesis. Practical life and the experience of its institutions were at all times foremost in his thought. Like Socrates, his mental urge was ethical and spiritual before it was constructive. His ideals looked always in the direction of attainment, although his faculty was critical and interpretative rather than creative.

The slight verse which Lincoln left was not promising in this sense. He had a deep-born love for song, but in what he has left us of verse, there resides, outside of a certain abundant human sympathy and capacity to carry his thought toward a conclusion, no special sense for rhythm, no spontaneous impact of art. The honest, heartfelt verve is not supported by a native flush of color or insight, or the rare gift of workmanship.[1]

His critical faculty remained dominant. This side of his mind commands our sincere respect. He had a natural aptitude for analysis and for generalization, but his environment, always tending to develop the practical side of his nature, furnished, during the years of his growth and professional education, no congenial atmosphere for the higher artistic per-

1 Pages 322-329, Appendix.

ceptions. He had the necessary endowments of mind. He was nobly sagacious and imaginative, but he lacked the range of equipment to supply standards and method. His environment was such that he was drawn early and continuously in the direction of public speech. Even here he preferred discussion to oratory. Although circumstances drew him toward politics rather than to scholarship or literature, his mind continued dominant over his tongue. Fortunately, he early formed the habit of writing as well as speaking,[1] and this habit, nourished by his love for reading and analysis, kept alive his penchant for criticism.

It was Lincoln's capacity for clear, incisive, yet sympathetic criticism that gave him the preëminent place in the leadership of the great movement which culminated in the overthrow of slavery and brought about the new order of American life. Glimpses of this form of his ability may be discerned in a lecture which he gave on Temperance before the Washington Society, January 22, 1842. He condemned the old doctrine of temperance reform by "denunciations against dram-sellers and dram-drinkers." This method was "unjust, as well as impolitic." Drinking among men had a long history. Govern-

1 Tarbell, I:36, 37.

ment had provided it for soldiers and sailors; physicians had prescribed it. Its manufacture had long been regarded as an honorable livelihood. It was known and acknowledged to be the cause of much harm, "but none seemed to think the injury arose from the use of a bad thing, but from the abuse of a very good thing." The failing of those who abused it was regarded as a misfortune, "not as a crime, or even as a disgrace." Why "assail, condemn, or despise them" then? Another error of the old reformers was their contention that "habitual drunkards were utterly incorrigible" . . . to be turned "adrift and damned without remedy." This attitude was "so cold-blooded and feelingless" . . . it could not "enlist the enthusiasm of a popular cause." As applied to the cause of temperance reform, the doctrine of unpardonable sin is to be denied. It is better to teach, "While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return." The chief of sinners may become the chief apostle of a cause. For their task, "none are so well educated." The world would be vastly benefited by a "total and final banishment from it of all intoxicating drinks." Three-fourths of mankind confess it, and the "rest acknowledge it in their hearts."

There was the note of something prospective in

this address. It was both sympathetic and constructive in what it proposed. It contains passages prefiguring a simple yet lofty style. The theme of the address was temperance, but the occasion was the anniversary of Washington's natal day. Lincoln closed his address with a reverent, well-spoken tribute to the memory of Washington—a tribute only slightly marred by its stilted, over-rhetorical language.

Lincoln's eulogy on Henry Clay in 1852 surpasses in style and literary merit anything he wrote in the intervening decade. As a composition it is in some respects admirable. The language is frank, well chosen, and interpretative. The address is well planned and well proportioned; the thought is not extravagant in any sense, but fairly represents the eloquence, the ideals, and personality of Clay. His service and character as a statesman are appraised, and Lincoln's understanding of these squared with his own views of the Union, of slavery, and of the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln's writing during the ten years between the Temperance address and this eulogy include his speeches in Congress. He introduced the so-called "Spot Resolutions" in the House calling upon President Polk for specific information con-

cerning the beginning of the Mexican War and throwing upon him the burden of an ethical justification of that war. He addressed the House in an arraignment of the President for his war policy, which Lincoln regarded as indefensible. He supported a national policy of internal improvements in a speech which, like the speech and resolutions on the Mexican question, revealed breadth of legal knowledge and historical research. He delivered also a party speech in support of Zachary Taylor for President which was not above the average performance of this character at the time.

There was nothing notable in these addresses. His congressional experience Lincoln seems to have regarded as a sort of *obiter dictum* in his professional life and in no sense an introduction to a political career. "It afforded him a close inspection of the complex machinery of the Federal government and its relation to that of the States," as Mr. John G. Nicolay wrote, and "it broadened immensely the horizon of his observation, and the sharp personal rivalries he noted at the center of the nation opened to him new lessons in the study of human nature."[1] He attracted in Congress the interest of Alexander H. Stephens, who said of him: "Mr. Lincoln was

1 Nicolay, "Abraham Lincoln," pp. 89, 90.

careless as to his manners and awkward in his speech, but possessed a strong, clear, vigorous mind. He always attracted and riveted the attention of the House when he spoke. His manner of speech as well as of thought was original. He had no model. He was a man of strong convictions, and what Carlyle would have called an *earnest* man. He abounded in anecdote. He illustrated everything he was talking about by an anecdote, always exceedingly apt and pointed; and socially he always kept his company in a roar of laughter." In view of the friendship between Lincoln and Stephens as fellow Whigs at this time, and the subsequent divergence of their political careers, it is interesting to record Lincoln's letter to Herndon, written from Washington, February 2, 1848, giving his earliest impression of Stephens:

DEAR WILLIAM: I just take my pen to say that Mr. Stephens, of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man, with a voice like Logan's, has just concluded the very best speech of an hour's length I ever heard. My old withered dry eyes are full of tears yet.

If he writes it out anything like he delivered it, our people shall see a good many copies of it.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Lincoln's partnership with Herndon, following a brief association with Judge Stephen T. Logan (1841-1843), began in 1843. This last partnership continued actively until Lincoln's election to the Presidency. The period from 1843 until the great debates with Douglas in 1858, interrupted only by his term in Congress, was preëminently that of Lincoln the lawyer. His chief intellectual concern during this distinctively professional period was the preparation and trial of cases. The extent of his service in causes before the Supreme Court of the State was probably not surpassed by any of his contemporaries of the Illinois bar.[1] His partner, Herndon, we are told, was one of the most widely read men in Springfield. An authority tells us that, at this time, "Herndon's chief extravagance was buying books."[2] He kept the office supplied with late volumes on a variety of subjects, a fact which greatly stimulated Lincoln's reading and conversation. His reading was stimulated also by Mrs. Lincoln and by Newton Bateman,[3] State Superintendent of Education, whose cultural attainments engaged Lincoln's interest and friendship.

1 Richards, "Abraham Lincoln, the Lawyer-Statesman," Chap. II and Appendix. Weik, "The Real Lincoln," p. 145.
2 Rankin, p. 120.
3 Arnold, "Abraham Lincoln," p. 176.

An important contribution of first-hand information on the subject of Lincoln's personality and intellectual habits during this period is given by Henry B. Rankin in his "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln" (1916). The author of this interesting volume of reminiscences, who read law in the office of Lincoln and Herndon, tells us of Lincoln's introduction to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass,* which Herndon added to the office library. The merits of the poem aroused highly spirited discussion and diversity of opinion between the "office students and Mr. Herndon."

Later, quite a surprise occurred when we found that the Whitman poetry and our discussions had been engaging Lincoln's silent attention. After the rest of us had finished our criticism of some peculiar verses and of Whitman in general . . . and had resumed our usual duties or had departed, Lincoln, who during the criticisms had been apparently in the unapproachable depths of one of his glum moods of meditative silence . . . took up *Leaves of Grass* for his first reading of it. After half an hour or more devoted to it he turned back to the first pages of it, and to our general surprise, began to read aloud. Other office work was discontinued by us all while he read with sympathetic emphasis verse after verse. His rendering revealed a

charm of new life in Whitman's versification. Save for a few comments on some broad allusions that Lincoln suggested could have been veiled, or left out, he commended the new poet's verses for their virility, freshness, unconventional sentiments, and unique form of expression, and claimed that Whitman gave promise of a new school of poetry.

Speaking in general of Lincoln's literary likings, Mr. Rankin continues:

He enjoyed particularly Holmes, Theodore Parker, Beecher, Whittier, Lowell, the elder Abbott, and Hawthorne. He cared little for fiction, though Uncle Tom's Cabin moved him deeply while reading it. His literary taste was keen and delicate, and his zest for the best in current literature was unerring to recognize and appreciate beauty of style and strength of personality in a writer's method of expressing thought. His likes and dislikes in literature were quick, strong, and positive. A few glances, a sentence read here and there, a hasty turning of leaves, sufficed with him for a decision to toss the book aside, or make it his own as he found leisure to read it. Lincoln was an earnest seeker of the best in thought and form in literature.[1]

This method of determining his "likes and dis-

1 Rankin, pp. 129, 130. See Whitney's "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln," Chap. XXI.

likes in literature" calls to mind Herndon's account of Lincoln's swift estimate of a biography of Burke:

In 1856 I purchased . . . a Life of Edmund Burke. I have forgotten now who the author was. . . . One morning Lincoln came into the office and, seeing the book in my hands, inquired what I was reading. . . . Taking it in his hand he threw himself down on the office sofa and hastily ran over its pages, reading a little here and there. At last he closed and threw it on the table with the exclamation, "No, I've read enough of it. It's like all the others. Biographies as generally written are not only misleading, but false. The author of this life of Burke makes a wonderful hero out of his subject. He magnifies his perfections —if he had any—and suppresses his imperfections. He is so faithful in his zeal and so lavish in praise of his every act that one is almost driven to believe that Burke never made a mistake or a failure in his life. . . . History is not history unless it is the truth."

It was of course Lincoln's misfortune not to have known the field of biography beyond Weems's Washington, and probably Marion's, and some campaign biographies. He had read also a life of Clay, and may have read Franklin's Autobiography.[1] He read the biographical histories of Abbott. Of

1 Holland, "Life of Lincoln," p. 31. Weik, "The Real Lincoln," cites Witt's "Life of Patrick Henry" and Holland's "Life of Van Buren." This was doubtless W. M. Holland's campaign biography of Van Buren. See Channing's *History of the United States,* Vol. V: 458 (note) for estimate.

such books he would easily discover the uncritical character. His keen judgment and taste for the best would detect the inadequacy of such books as interpretations of the men and events they described. His education had enabled him to estimate these juvenile performances at their value, but had not been inclusive enough to profit by biographical literature based upon competent research, carefully balanced evidence, and disinterested purpose.

It is natural that we should desire to reconstruct the processes of Lincoln's education and his acquisition of good style, but the effort to do this with the completeness to which research aspires is baffled at points for lack of evidence. It may be safe to conclude that from his admission to the bar to his re-entrance into politics in 1854, Lincoln devoted himself assiduously to reading and study. His partnership with such accomplished lawyers as Major Stuart and Judge Logan, from 1837 to 1843, afforded him an unusual opportunity to perfect himself in the principles and practice of law. But when in the latter year, upon his own initiative, he headed the new firm of Lincoln and Herndon, his cultural interests made rapid advancement. His acquaintance with literature now widened and was maintained for the rest of his life. His tastes were ver-

satile, he was conscious of the necessity of education to a successful career, and he had already developed that capacity for independent investigation and judging of facts which scholarship has accorded him so freely.

As early as 1839, according to Joseph Jefferson's autobiography, Lincoln appeared before the city council of Springfield and persuaded that body to relax its puritanic attitude toward the theatre and theatrical representations in that city. Mr. Jefferson says that when his company came against the obstruction of the city ordinance, "a young lawyer called on the managers. He had heard of the injustice, and offered, if they would place the matter in his hands, to have the license taken off, declaring that he only wanted to see fair play, and would accept no fee whether he failed or succeeded. The case was brought before the council. . . . He handled the subject with tact, skill, and humor, tracing the history of the drama from the time when Thespis acted in a cart, to the stage of to-day. . . . He now lies buried in Springfield, under a monument commemorating his greatness and his virtues,—and his name was Abraham Lincoln." [1]

Lincoln must be conceded the ability to master

1 Joseph Jefferson's *Autobiography*, pp. 28-30.

the literature of the subjects before him, and to assimilate the essential details of the problem within it. Behind this power was a native thirst for knowledge, a love for the best that had been said and thought in the world, "a sheer desire to see things as they are." This "self-educated" man clothed his mind with the materials of genuine culture. Call it genius or talent, the process of his attainment was that described by Professor Emerton in speaking of the education of Erasmus: "He was no longer at school, but was simply educating himself by the only pedagogical method which ever yet produced any results anywhere,—namely, by the method of his own tireless energy in continuous study and practice." [1]

1 Emerton, "Desiderius Erasmus," p. 22.

Lincoln's view of self-education is indicated in his letters to J. T. Thornton and J. M. Brockman, December 2, 1858, and September 25, 1860, respectively, the latter of which is to be found on page 303, Appendix.

CHAPTER III

PRELUDE TO THE GREAT DEBATE

It must not be. There is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established;
'T will be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

—*Shakespeare.*

Lincoln steadfastly resisted the temptations to climb upward by superficial means. He would not substitute cant for genuine speech. His native bent was toward the sincere and logical. His propositions and his ideals sought to over-reach the contingent and apparent and face the tests of general truth. This sincere trait of his character shows itself clearly in his second contest with Douglas at Peoria, October, 1854. After his opponent had spoken for three hours, until past five o'clock, and had been received with manifest marks of appreciation, Lincoln requested the crowd to return after supper to listen to his reply. As an inducement to the people to hear him through, as they had done in Douglas's case, he consented to give Douglas an hour for rebuttal. He announced to the reassem-

bled audience that he would speak on the Missouri Compromise, and said:

As I desire to present my own connected view of this subject, my remarks will not be specifically an answer to Judge Douglas; yet, as I proceed, the main points he has presented will arise, and will receive such respectful attention as I may be able to give them. . . . I do not propose to question the patriotism or to assail the motives of any man or class of men, but rather to confine myself to the naked merits of the question. I also wish to be no less than national in all the positions I may take, and whenever I take ground which others have thought, or may think, narrow, sectional, or dangerous to the Union, I hope to give a reason which will appear sufficient, at least to some, why I think differently.

And as this subject is no less than part and parcel of the larger general question of domestic slavery, I wish to make and keep the distinction between the existing institution and the extension of it so broad and clear that no honest man can misunderstand me, and no dishonest one misrepresent me.

These words represent Lincoln's propensity to reduce a question to its ultimate ground of validity. Like Burke, he was disposed to uncover the actual philosophy upon which the issue rested.

The Peoria speech is a long one. Likewise it has outstanding importance. It marks Lincoln's re-entrance into the arena of political debate and aspiration. This course was precipitated by the passage of Senator Douglas's bill through Congress in May, 1854, to permit the people of the Nebraska Territory to determine by popular vote whether they should enter the Union with or without slavery. This measure had also repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had forbidden slavery north of 36° 30′ north latitude. The unpopularity of this repeal in Illinois lost Douglas many of his former friends. His discomfiture in Chicago, where the crowd hissed him as he attempted to speak in defense of his measure, was followed by a speech at Springfield, where Lincoln was chosen to answer him. Lincoln's speech surprised even his closest friends by its great force and completeness, but no copy of it was preserved. The Peoria speech twelve days later is taken to be a repetition of it. This speech, which Lincoln wrote out after its delivery, is highly significant for the reason that it contains the ground argument which he opposed to Douglas in the debate four years later. It was the prelude to that great intellectual duel which was to determine whether Lincoln or Douglas should become President of the

United States, and which of the two political philosophies, nationalism or state's rights, should triumph in the country.

At Peoria, Lincoln maintained two cardinal doctrines which Douglas never successfully combated, around which the sentiment of the nation opposed to slavery consolidated as the basis of the new Republican party. These doctrines were:

I. That the Kansas-Nebraska act was wrong because it violated a just compromise and permitted the extension of an institution which in itself was "monstrous" and "unjust."

II. That Douglas's contention that the act was an assertion of the "sacred right of self-government" was fallacious, because, although the doctrine of self-government "is absolutely and eternally right," the act in question had no application to the principle of self-government because the negro is a man.

Of its arguments which Lincoln later employed against Douglas in the great senatorial campaign were these:

If he is not a man, in that case he who is a man may as a matter of self-government do what he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say

The Peoria speech is a long one. Likewise it has outstanding importance. It marks Lincoln's re-entrance into the arena of political debate and aspiration. This course was precipitated by the passage of Senator Douglas's bill through Congress in May, 1854, to permit the people of the Nebraska Territory to determine by popular vote whether they should enter the Union with or without slavery. This measure had also repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had forbidden slavery north of 36° 30′ north latitude. The unpopularity of this repeal in Illinois lost Douglas many of his former friends. His discomfiture in Chicago, where the crowd hissed him as he attempted to speak in defense of his measure, was followed by a speech at Springfield, where Lincoln was chosen to answer him. Lincoln's speech surprised even his closest friends by its great force and completeness, but no copy of it was preserved. The Peoria speech twelve days later is taken to be a repetition of it. This speech, which Lincoln wrote out after its delivery, is highly significant for the reason that it contains the ground argument which he opposed to Douglas in the debate four years later. It was the prelude to that great intellectual duel which was to determine whether Lincoln or Douglas should become President of the

to-day. At Peoria he said: "What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. . . . The master not only governs the slave without his consent, but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself. Allow all the governed an equal voice in the government, and that, and that only, is self-government." This complete description of responsible government required a great struggle to make it a fact. It is interesting to compare Lincoln's dictum with that of a great English statesman of the mediæval age, prophetic of British democracy of a later time: "What concerns all should by all be approved."[1] In these days it reminds one also of Immanuel Kant's definition of "constitutional freedom, as the right of every citizen to have to obey no other law than that to which he has given his consent or approval,"[2] a definition of which his own countrymen as yet are ignorant or are powerless to enjoy. The case of Belgium and certain other countries strikingly call to mind Kant's corollary proposition: "No State shall intermeddle by force with the constitution or

1 Edward I: Quod tangit omnes, ab omnibus comprebetur. Translated above.

2 "Essay on Eternal Peace," translated by Hastic, Boston edn., p. 137.

government of another State."[1] We shall see, in the next chapter, how Lincoln, in debate with Douglas, extended his conception of the democratic principle by a telling exposition of absolutism.

Meantime it is important to sketch the story of his great utterances and the character of their content as they lead up to that point. The closely reasoned argument of the Peoria speech drove the oratory of Douglas to cover. The senator asked and received from Lincoln an agreement that neither of them should make another speech during the campaign. Lincoln (who alone did not violate the agreement) had shown his capacity to burrow deeper than his opponent, to reason from principle rather than from expediency, and he disclosed the fact that he did not go before the public without having mastered the history of the question in debate. Unlike the method of Douglas, he gave piquancy also to what he said by the use of apt quotation and literary allusion. In this characteristic he was never pedantic, but apparently spontaneous. The effect was an appropriate reinforcement of the facts and statements he employed. The Peoria speech exhibits no notable literary content beyond a sound analysis of the points in controversy.

1 Ibid., p. 73.

It shows a wider reading, however, than any of Douglas's speeches revealed. From Pope's *Essay on Man* he employed the familiar aphorism, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." From *Hamlet* he used the line, "It hath [has] no relish of salvation in it." *Macbeth* supplied him with "Cancel and tear in [into] pieces," and "bloody hand" is embedded in a well-conceived allusion to the Macbeth incident of the murder of Duncan.[1] Two paragraphs before, he adapts biblical phraseology to the national dishonor of slavery: "Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us repurify it. Let us turn and wash it white in the spirit, if not in the blood, of the Revolution."[2] He uses the metaphors "Behemoth of danger" and "Genius of Discord," biblical and classical allusions respectively, easily identified. He adapts Wendell Phillips's words about Napoleon in characterizing the Nebraska act as "grand, gloomy, and peculiar." He indicates his dictionary habit by quoting Webster's definition of the verb "to compromise," uses scriptural language frequently, quotes from the Declaration of Independence, and accepts Douglas's challenge to explicate the slavery question by reference to the attitude of the Revolutionary fathers.[3] This

1 *Macbeth*, II. 2; V. 1. 2 Revelation, 7:14.
3 Extract from Peoria speech, Page 222, Appendix.

same challenge formed a part of his discussion six years afterward in the Cooper Institute Address.

In connection with the Peoria speech, Lincoln's letters to George Robertson, August 15, 1855,[1] and to Joshua Speed, August 24 of the same year,[2] are of interest. The first indicates the country's abandonment of the spirit of the Fathers toward peaceful emancipation, the method Lincoln espoused. It points out the fixed temper of the advocates of slavery, and defines the paramount political problem of the time: "Can we as a nation continue together permanently—forever—half slave and half free? The problem," he writes, "is too mighty for me. May God in his mercy superintend the solution." Months before this letter, this root idea of Lincoln's analysis of the slavery problem was engendering in his mind. Traveling the circuit after the Peoria address, Lincoln on one occasion occupied a room with Judge Dickey. Before retiring they had sat up late discussing the slavery question. The judge woke up early the next morning and found Lincoln "half sitting up in bed." "Dickey," he said, "I tell you this nation cannot exist half slave and half free." "Oh, Lincoln," said I, "go to sleep."[3] Lincoln was bringing to birth the funda-

1 Page 298, Appendix. 2 Page 300, Appendix.
3 Tarbell, I:288.

mental proposition which in three years was to take on the final and startling form he gave it in the first paragraph of the celebrated Springfield speech.

The second letter makes it clear that Lincoln had reached a philosophical understanding of what in the average man aroused but little more than a predisposition to one side or the other, unaccompanied by thorough-going conviction or clear insight. To many at the time he gave the impression of unsafe radicalism. Possibly there were those who regarded him as touched with the spirit of fanaticism they were accustomed to associate with over-ardent reformers. To us, at this distance, he seems, rather, to have possessed a clear discernment of the ethical forces ever active in human nature and civilization whereby the race is pulled upward. He grasped the infinite spiritual dissonance of one man's, or set of men's, assumption of control over another for selfish purposes. How could one man, he reasoned, by presuming to own another as property, regard himself as superior to the other in a commonwealth which presupposed the equality of all men and in which public opinion was the totality of all men's viewpoints?

"Our government," he said, after the Buchanan election in 1856, "rests in public opinion. Whoever

can change public opinion, can change the government, practically, just so much. Public opinion on any subject always has a 'central idea' from which all minor thoughts radiate. That 'central idea' in our political public opinion at the beginning was, and until recently has continued to be, 'the equality of men.' And although it has always submitted patiently to whatever of inequality there seemed to be as matter of actual necessity, its constant working has been a steady progress towards the practical equality of all men"[1]

By 1856 the anti-slavery sentiment of the country had gathered such momentum that it demanded a new vehicle of expression. The old Whig party had proved inadequate for this purpose, and in that year the Republican party, embracing anti-slavery elements from the older parties, sprang into being. Illinois was one of the first states to form an organization of the new political faith, and Lincoln, leaving the Whigs, united himself with it. He was already well known in the State as an effective public speaker; and there were those who regarded him as more powerful than Douglas, the acknowledged leader of his party in State and nation. Lincoln's name had not been placed on the program of the

1 Republican banquet, Chicago, Dec. 10, 1856.

Republican State convention which met at Bloomington, May 29, 1856, but he was called for by the crowd, and responded in what is now known as "The Lost Speech." The newspaper reporters, among them Joseph Medill of the *Chicago Tribune,* rapt by Lincoln's wonderful eloquence, failed to take notes on the speech, and it was not reproduced in the reports of the convention. H. C. Whitney, an attorney who had ridden the circuit with Lincoln, was thoughtful enough, however, to make full memoranda of the remarkable address, and forty years afterward, at the instance of Miss Ida Tarbell, expanded his notes into "The Lost Speech" as we have it.[1]

At Bloomington, Lincoln, alluding to the advantage accruing to slavery through the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, declared prophetically that "unless popular opinion makes itself very strongly felt, and a change is made in our present course, blood will flow on account of Nebraska, and brother's hand will be raised against brother!" He indicated his familiarity with the attitude of the Fathers toward slavery by quoting from the first draft of the Declaration the condemnatory phrases which they omitted from the finished instrument. He

1 Tarbell, I :296.

reviewed the history of the land cessions of the original States and of the subsequent effort to introduce slavery into Illinois. The ready knowledge he employed contains abundant evidence of his habit of devoting himself to research as a means of arriving at convictions and their proper support.

He spoke of slavery as a "moral and political wrong;" referred to Douglas's reasoning as the "use of a sort of bastard logic, or noisy assumption," in order to prepare the public mind for the gradual "encroachment of the Moloch of slavery." He conceded the necessity of a fugitive slave law because it was so "nominated in the bond."[1] He applied to Douglas, Hamlet's words: "Where the offence lies, there let the [great] axe fall." He spoke of certain persons in Kansas as "the cat's-paws" of the authors of the Nebraska act, a phrase he later used at a Chicago banquet[2] and originally found in Aesop's Fables. He adapted four lines from a song by T. H. Bailey,[3] and alluded to Madame Roland's

1 *Merchant of Venice,* IV. 1.

2 Chicago, Dec. 10, 1856. He quoted also from *King Lear:* "He's a shelled peascod" ["That's a shell'd peascod"].

3 Thomas H. Bailey, an English poet (1797-1839). The original lines are:

> Oh, no, we never mention her,
> Her name is never heard;
> My lips are now forbid to speak
> That once familiar word.

famous exclamation when he declared that "monstrous crimes are committed in its [slavery's] name by persons collectively which they would not dare to commit as individuals." He made a telling reference to Lord Mansfield's decision in reference to slavery in the Somerset case. He likened the institution to "the Juggernaut, the great Hindu idol;" referred to a "black-letter law book" in which he had read that a slave was "legally not a *person* but a *thing*," and quoted "Madison's avowal that 'the word *slave* ought not to appear in the Constitution.'" In this speech Lincoln made frequent quotations from the Bible, as was his wont. In his appeal to the audience not to "mistake that the ballot is stronger than the bullet," we have a reminiscence of Bulwer-Lytton's oft-quoted, "The pen is mightier than the sword." The climax of the "Lost Speech" is reported by Mr. Whitney in these words: "We will say to the Southern disunionists,—We won't go out of the Union, and you SHAN'T!!!" Four years later Lincoln wrote similar words to his old Congressional friend, A. H. Stephens, as follows: "Let me say right here that only unanimous consent of all of the states can dissolve this Union. We will not secede and you shall not."[1]

1 Tracy, "Unpublished Letters of Abraham Lincoln," p. 125.

From 1856 to 1858 Lincoln's writings consist for the most part of personal letters, court arguments, and political speeches. Of the latter, the fragment of a speech dated October 1, 1856, is probably representative of the fifty or more speeches he delivered during the Fremont campaign but which were not preserved. In this Fragment on Sectionalism he makes a characteristically mathematical analysis of the issue between Buchanan and Fremont in their race for the Presidency. He rebuts the charge of sectionalism brought against those opposed to the spread of slavery. He explained the South's pecuniary interest in the extension of the institution and the North's opposition to it on moral principle. On June 26 of the next year, replying at Springfield to Douglas's effort to calm his constituents who were agitated over the Dred Scott decision, Lincoln argued that the Supreme Court had reached an erroneous conclusion and had not yet "quite established a settled doctrine for the country." He called attention, also, to the fallacy in Douglas's contention that the authors of the Declaration of Independence, instead of implying that negroes were included in the doctrine of all men's equality, meant "British subjects born and residing on this continent being equal to British subjects born and residing in Great Britain."

Such an interpretation, he pointed out, would exclude the "French, Germans, and other white people of the world," all of whom would be "gone to pot"[1] —an expression he may have picked up from current phraseology.

On the contrary, argued Lincoln, "the authors of that notable instrument intended to include *all* men," not "to declare all men equal in *all respects* . . . in color, size, intellect, moral development, or social capacity," but "equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . . They meant simply to declare the right, so that enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances should permit.

"They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere. . . . Its authors meant it to be—as, thank God, it is now proving itself—a stumbling-block to all those who in after times might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful paths of despotism."

1 An English expression as old, at least, as the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

A man with a clear head, a good heart, and an honest understanding, will always write well.—*Southey.*

The hour of emancipation must come; but whether it will be brought on by the generous energies of our own minds, or by the bloody scenes of St. Domingo, is a leaf of our history not yet turned over. The Almighty has no attributes which can take sides with us in such a contest.—*Jefferson.*

In 1858 came the great debate between Lincoln and Douglas which the events of at least four years had been generating. The immediate occasion was the campaign for United States senator. From early life the two men had been thrown into political opposition. Both were "self-made" and ambitious for a public career.[1] Douglas began life as a Democrat, Lincoln as a Whig. Douglas mounted steadily upward as a Democrat, while Lincoln united his fortune with the Republicans. Douglas had no hostile feelings toward slavery; Lincoln early determined to do what he could to limit its hold upon the country. Both men studied law and both enjoyed public

1 For Lincoln's own parallel between himself and Douglas, see Browne, p. 188.

speech—albeit from different angles. Douglas was bold, dramatic, and winsome; in speech, facile and strategic, ardent and persuasive. He was without humor, and was a master of sophistry.[1] Lincoln was modest, angular, and at first sight, unprepossessing;[2] in speech, he ranged from the dry to the philosophic and inspired. He loved humor, and was keen to detect a fallacy in argument. Both were men of dignity, strength, and striking personality. They began public life as members of the State legislature. Both served in the national House of Representatives, Lincoln entering the House in 1846 as Douglas was leaving it for the Senate. Twelve years later they were rival candidates for the upper chamber, and the debates were their appeal to the people for the support of their respective contentions. Their disagreement over the Kansas-Nebraska act brought the supreme issue of the time to such a focus in the public consciousness that the two disputants emerged from the contest the most dynamic and brilliant leaders in the political field.

These debates are not literature of the imagination, but of the forum. Like the philippics of De-

1 Blaine's "Twenty Years in Congress," I, chap. vii, contains an excellent comparative study of the two men.

2 Compare Mrs. John A. Logan's "Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife," p. 61. Compare Lord Charnwood's "Abraham Lincoln," pp. 133, 134.

mosthenes and the invectives of Cicero, they are the products of a historic occasion. They recall the memorable opposition of ideas which made Hamilton and Jefferson the protagonists of divergent political schools. They bring to mind the forensic collision of Webster with Hayne and Calhoun or the spirited political rivalry which divided Clay and Jackson. Under a government where public opinion is the court of final appeal, such a contest of ideas is the open road to stable government, the procedure that invokes majority rule. The debate stirred the feelings of the people to a higher level of thought and virtue. Lincoln's matchless affirmations against human slavery were a solid contribution to the literature of democracy. At points he rises to those conceptions of human rights and freedom which are of permanent interest. These passages are inspired with high sincerity, emotion, and insight. They do not appear to possess the conscious art of form nor the "veiled rhythm" of literary prose, though Lincoln developed and possessed a sense for both of these elements of literary expression. His speeches in reply to Douglas are not made up at any point of the materials of creative imagination. But they do contain the spirit of *reality,* which, it is well said, "has become recognized as the one vital element

of significant art."[1] They indicate the direction in which Lincoln's native taste loved to assert itself —the conscious direction of his profounder feelings clothed in the garb of beautiful words. They have little or no accent of the "grand style" such as lifts some of Burke's speeches to the dignity of literature, but on the side of political democracy or government by consent, they have "the quality of the seer, the power himself to see what has happened and to make what he has seen clear to the vision of others."[2] Outside of these loftier passages, Lincoln's arguments are concerned with statements of a personal nature called out by his antagonist, to matters of historical significance, and to the legal or practical aspects of the policies in dispute.

Lincoln's final argument at Alton, October 15, contains a very good summary of both sides of the debate. Four months before he had opened his campaign for the senatorship with a well-known and carefully prepared speech before the Republican state convention at Springfield. That convention had adopted a resolution "that Abraham Lincoln is the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate as the successor

1 W. C. Brownell, "Criticism," p. 63.
2 Roosevelt, "History as Literature," p. 12.

of Stephen A. Douglas." Lincoln opened up his address with the famous paragraph in which he declared: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. . . . Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South."[1] Lincoln had pondered this general proposition for three years. He had at last linked it up with a "universally known figure expressed in simple language as universally well known," that would "strike home to the minds of men," and "raise them up to the peril of the times."[2] This paragraph was done in excellent prose. It reduced into single perspective the past and the future of the slavery question in America. Politically, too, it was strategic, even though Lincoln's intimate friends considered it hazardous to his prospects in the campaign.[3] As they predicted,

1 Pages 223-233, Appendix.
2 Herndon and Weik, II:398.
3 Ibid., 399, 400. Herndon calls attention to the "similarity in figure and thought in the opening lines" of Lincoln's Springfield speech and Webster's reply to Hayne. Lincoln wrote to O. P. Hall to interpret the "house-divided-against-itself" paragraph.

Douglas seized upon it as his opponent's attempt to inspire sectional hatred in the country. As Lincoln foresaw, it centered the people's attention upon the ultimate meaning of the issue between him and Douglas, and definitely aligned party opinion for the supreme decision of America upon the "ultimate extinction" of a system dishonorable to her civilization. Lincoln amplified this fundamental thesis by maintaining that events indicated a "preconcert" of Douglas and other Democratic leaders to nationalize slavery. These events were "compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision." Only another Supreme Court decision was needed to restrain a State from forbidding slavery, and Douglas's indifference to whether slavery were voted up or voted down was tending to prepare the public mind to support such a possible decision.

The effect was crucial. The Springfield speech threw upon Douglas the necessity of defending his Kansas-Nebraska policy in the face of its negation by the Supreme Court. The climax was reached at Freeport, August 27. At this debate Lincoln propounded to Douglas four critical questions. The second of these was decisive: "Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude

slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State constitution?" To this question, framed with "malice aforethought," Douglas replied: "I answer emphatically, as Lincoln has heard me answer a hundred times from every stump in Illinois, that in my opinion the people of a Territory can, by lawful means, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State constitution." Naturally, the effect was disastrous to Douglas's logic. He had unwittingly permitted himself to be lured into the awkward position of trying to ride two horses going in opposite directions. He had maintained that Lincoln, by arguing against the Dred Scott decision, was disloyal to the Supreme Court. His answer to Lincoln's interrogatory disclosed to his Southern supporters that he likewise was an impossible exponent of the judicial doctrine which had given the hope of fresh vitality to their "peculiar institution." Lincoln had eclipsed his opponent's ambitions for the Presidency. That star was moving in the direction of his own fortune.

The debate was a well-staged and ably conducted battle in political dialectics. In the effort to disclose the proper policy of government toward the paramount question, each of the two men sought to mould public opinion to his side of the controversy.

STATUE OF LINCOLN BY ANDREW O'CONNOR

Erected in front of the Capitol, Springfield, Illinois, 1918

Lincoln felt that he was the spokesman of an advancing civilization. Douglas was not so fortunate in his theme. He was defending ideals destined to be abolished. He not only held by the act of 1854 and by the adjudication which rendered that act null and void; he supported slavery by maintaining that Lincoln stood for dead uniformity of institutions in a country whose diversity of climate and resources called for variegation in laws and social organization. He believed that the Government and its citizenship were for "white men and their posterity forever;" that those who opposed the extension of slavery would make the negro socially and politically the equal of the white man—the prelude, he thought, to the amalgamation of the two races. He anticipated nothing with respect to the moral wrong of slavery, offered no objection to its spread under his hypothesis of democracy, and saw in it no economic injustice to the white man. He indicated no forward look toward its ultimate disappearance in accord with the tendency of the age, and totally misconceived the "covert" language of the Constitution in its allusion to slaves. His interpretation of equality as contemplated by the Declaration was shifty, and his contention that, irrespective of the Supreme Court decision, the people of a Territory, by "un-

friendly legislation," could prevent the introduction of slavery, was fatal to law and order.

Lincoln's views ran squarely counter to this philosophy of politics. He would repudiate the principle of the "divine right of kings" and erect in its stead the "common right of humanity." He repeated at Alton what he had previously declared to be his view of the Declaration of Independence[1] on the question of equality, and discussed the attitude of the framers of the Constitution toward slavery.

I entertain the opinion, upon evidence sufficient to my mind, that the fathers of this government placed that institution [slavery] where the public mind did rest in the belief that it was in course of ultimate extinction. Let me ask why they made provision that the source of slavery—the African slave-trade—should be cut off at the end of twenty years? Why did they make provision that in all new territory we owned at that time, slavery should be forever inhibited? Why stop its source in one direction and cut off its source in another, if they did not look at its being placed in course of ultimate extinction?

* * * * * *

It is not true that our fathers, as Judge Douglas assumes, made this government part slave and part free.

1 In the Peoria speech, 1854. See pages 222-223, Appendix.

. . . He assumes that slavery is a rightful thing in itself—was introduced by the framers of the Constitution. The exact truth is that they found the institution existing among us, and they left it as they found it. But in making the government they left this institution with many clear marks of disapprobation upon it . . . and they left it among them because of the difficulty—the absolute impossibility—of its immediate removal.

* * * * * *

The judge alludes very often in the course of his remarks to the exclusive rights which the States have to decide the whole thing for themselves. I agree with him very readily that the different States have that right. He is but fighting a man of straw when he assumes that I am contending against the right of the States to do as they please about it. Our controversy with him is in regard to the new Territories. . . . What I insist upon is, that the new Territories shall be kept free from it while in the territorial condition.

* * * * * *

The real issue in this controversy . . . is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong. . . . That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. **It is the eternal struggle between these two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to**

face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other is the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

And if I believed that the right to hold a slave in a Territory was equally fixed in the Constitution with the right to reclaim fugitives, I should be bound to give it the legislation necessary to support it. . . . I say, if that Dred Scott decision is correct, then the right to hold slaves in a Territory is equally a constitutional right with the right of a slaveholder to have his runaway returned. . . . I defy any man to make an argument that will justify unfriendly legislation to deprive a slaveholder of his right to hold his slave in a Territory, that will not equally, in all its length, breadth, and thickness, furnish an argument for nullifying the fugitive-slave law. Why, there is no such an Abolitionist in the nation as Douglas, after all.

Douglas's formula shielded slavery as an institution and admitted of its extension. Lincoln's formula called for immediate restriction and "ultimate

extinction." In the election which followed the debate, Lincoln's party was supported by a majority of the popular vote in the State, but the legislature, by a narrow margin, chose Douglas as his own successor in the Senate. The debate marked the crest of a great political movement in the country. That movement had created a new party of opposition to Douglas's great party—a new party with a powerful leadership and a progressive programme.

An auspicious note of the new regime impending was Lincoln's success in trying out a novel fashion in public speech. He had inherited the example of formal and high-sounding oratory. Gradually he freed himself from that love of profuseness which had given distinction to the smooth periods of speakers entranced with the classic tradition. The people, as usual, were ready for the change before it came. Lincoln was a pioneer in the speech of pith and point. He was daring to usher in an improved breed of eloquence—"the power," as Emerson puts it, "to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak." The end and aim of the new method in the forum was to convince the judgment and provoke an enlightened ground of action. Douglas was predisposed to speech that was courtly, propitious, prudential. Such a style aimed

to please by verbal enchantment, to inspire loyalty through the impression of mental dimension. It is effective sometimes in promoting a false sense of security by means of skillfully shadowed counsel. Lord Charnwood contrasts the two styles of public discourse very happily in speaking of Lincoln's connection with the debate:[1]

One fact about the method of his speaking is easily detected. In debate, at least, he made no use of perorations, and the reader who looks for them will often find that Lincoln just used up the last few minutes in clearing up some unimportant point which he wanted to explain only if there was time for it. We associate our older parliamentary oratory with an art which keeps the hearer pleasedly expectant rather than dangerously attentive, through an argument which if dwelt upon might prove unsubstantial, secure that it all leads in the end to some great cadence of noble sound. But in Lincoln's argumentative speeches the employment of beautiful words is least sparing at the beginning or when he passes to a new subject. It seems as if he deliberately used up his rhetorical effects at the outset to put his audience in the temper in which they would earnestly follow him and to challenge their full attention to reasoning which was to satisfy their calmer judgment. He put himself in a position in which, if

1 "Abraham Lincoln," pp. 134, 135.

his argument were not sound, nothing could save his speech from failure as a speech. Perhaps no standing epithet of praise hangs with such a weight on a man's reputation as the epithet "honest." . . . It is no mean intellectual and spiritual achievement to be as honest in speech with a crowd as in the dearest intercourse of life.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE OF THE DEBATES

The real democratic American idea is, not that every man shall be on a level with every other, but that every one shall have liberty, without hindrance, to be what God made him.—*Beecher.*

Lincoln was now a permanent figure in national politics. Whether he willed it or not, he could not escape being drafted into the service of his party to further the special motive for which it came into being. He had taken the lead in formulating its doctrine. He had exercised and massed public opinion around that doctrine. Writing to A. G. Henry in November, 1858, he said: "I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age, which I could have had in no other way; and though I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone." During the following winter, he prepared a lecture on "Discoveries, Inventions, and Improvements." This he delivered "at several towns in the central part of the State, but it was so

commonplace, and met with such indifferent success, that he soon dropped it altogether."[1] Afterward, as President, in conversation with Agassiz, Lincoln spoke of having at one time tried his hand "at composing a literary lecture—something which he thought entirely out of his line."[2] The composition, Brooks says, "was never finished, and was left among his loose papers at Springfield when he came to Washington."

There is no evidence that Lincoln undertook this lecture as a means of enhancing his income. Henry C. Whitney had read to him a lecture by Bancroft on the "wonderful progress of man," and Lincoln afterward stated to him and to Leonard Swett that he had been "thinking much on the subject and believed he would write a lecture on 'Man and His Progress.'" Herndon tells us that invitations to deliver the lecture "came in very freely,"[3] but Lincoln, probably discouraged by the slight reception accorded him in his few appearances as lecturer already, declined further engagements. Because a

1 Herndon and Weik, III: 448, 449. See Weik's "The Real Lincoln" (1922), pp. 247-249, for quotation from this lecture and critical comment on Herendon.

2 Harper's Magazine, XXXI:222-230.

3 Tracy, "Unpublished Letters of Abraham Lincoln," publishes Lincoln's replies to invitations to lecture at Rock Island and Chicago, pp. 104, 141. Dr. William Jayne, in "Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln," p. 11, speaks of Lincoln as having lectured before his literary society at Illinois College, and giving the proceeds to the society.

few Illinois towns in the vicinity of Springfield did not pour out of evenings to listen to Douglas's great opponent in an unfinished dissertation on the progress of man would be no criterion of his competency to compose a lecture or to interest an audience. At Springfield he had addressed a ratification meeting of three, including himself and Herndon, a few days after the birth of the Republican party at Bloomington, Illinois, where he had electrified his audience by the "Lost Speech." The lecture itself is interesting as an initial effort on a learned subject by a man who was deeply interested in the progress of civilization, but who lacked the preparation for composing anything notable or highly instructive on the subject.

Had Lincoln chosen to write a lecture for delivery, or an essay for publication, on some aspect of liberty or democracy, he would doubtless have greatly succeeded. He had the capacity for accurate and searching investigation in such a field, and was gifted with the power of thought to inform facts with striking interest—as his Cooper Institute address the next year abundantly showed.[1] But even such a lecture, at that time, would have required

1 Arnold, p. 444, says: "There was a lecture of his upon Burns full of favorite quotations and sound criticism." No trace of such a lecture has been found.

other than a central Illinois town for an audience, and such an essay would have attracted the interest only of those who could find pleasure in the weightier contributions to magazines and books. The lecture in question strikes one as deliberately juvenile in conception and presentation. It was seemingly designed to inspire in a popular audience the beginnings of interest in a subject of distinctly cultural value. Lincoln's own interest in the subject was of such a nature. With such a purpose, it was something more than naïveté that led him to use the Bible as one of his sources of information. One point he took from the Webster's Dictionary of that time; others from history, and still others from patent laws.

That Lincoln's purpose and aim were solely cultural would seem to be implied in some of the more seriously conceived sentences of the address. A few of these are worth quoting:

> What one observes, and would himself infer nothing from, he tells to another, and that other at once sees a valuable hint in it.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> I will venture to consider it [invention of printing] the true termination of that period called "the dark ages."

They [the mass of men at the advent of printing] not only looked upon the educated few as superior beings, but they supposed themselves to be naturally incapable of rising to equality. To emancipate the mind from this false estimate of itself is the great task which printing came into the world to perform. . . . It is, in this connection, a curious fact that a new country is most favorable—almost necessary—to the emancipation of thought, and the consequent advancement of civilization and the arts.

This lecture contains but a single literary allusion, and that is a facetious application of two lines of Cato's soliloquy, in Addison's tragedy, "Cato," to Young America.

Lincoln continued to discuss the "doctrine of squatter sovereignty" and the Dred Scott decision in addresses which were but reverberant of the late contest with Douglas. At Chicago, at Columbus, Ohio, and at Cincinnati, as well as at various points in Kansas, he responded to invitations to continue the theme which had found in him its most effective expositor. Beyond the borders of his own State, he was beginning to be looked upon as the ablest interpreter of the new Republican party, which was now, everywhere north of the slavery line, gathering its forces together for the next national election. He

was looked upon with favor as a presidential possibility. Douglas was in the race for the Democratic nomination. The Ohio speeches were prelusive of the fateful campaign of the following year. At Columbus, where Douglas had previously spoken, Lincoln took occasion to clear up a current misrepresentation of his views on the political and social rights of the negro. He had been accused of favoring negro suffrage, and Douglas had interpreted him as advocating the social equality of black and white men. He quoted his remarks on this subject, made in reply to Douglas both at Ottawa and at Charleston, Ill. At Ottawa he said:

I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose either directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. . . . I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that . . . there is no reason in the world

why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas, he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral and intellectual endowments. But in the right to eat bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.

Substantially the same declaration he quoted from his late speech at Charleston. His attitude on the subject was unequivocal, and it expressed the heart of the slavery controversy. The Columbus reply to Douglas was in every sense typical of Lincoln's plain and unerring power to outreason his opponent. The style was serious and unadorned, definite and coherent, though conversational in phrase. He answered Douglas's finesse in making a distinction between federal and local authority favorable to his "squatter sovereignty" doctrine by analyzing an article on the subject which Douglas had contributed to Harper's Magazine. This involved a very clear discussion of the divergence between the views of the two men on popular sovereignty. In regard to the government of a Territory, Lincoln had, of

course, no difficulty in showing that his opponent's own reasoning emerged inevitably in a recognition of Congress as the ultimate authority. Applied to a Territory, therefore, Douglas's view of popular sovereignty admitted the possibility of establishing slavery in it irrespective of the wishes of the slaves themselves or of the families inhabiting, or to inhabit, the same territory. In interpreting the attitude of the fathers, whom Douglas had aligned in support of his popular sovereignty views, Lincoln completely out-maneuvered the Senator by the simple process of showing "what these men did themselves do upon this very question of slavery in the Territories." This he accomplished by reciting plainly and accurately the history of the Ordinances of 1784 and 1787, specifically toward slavery; the relation of the Constitution to the later Ordinance, and the attitude of Thomas Jefferson toward slavery.

No more telling language was employed by Lincoln in this powerful Columbus speech than this, directed to Douglas:

> I suppose the institution of slavery really looks small to him. He is so put up by nature that a lash upon his back would hurt him, but a lash upon anybody else's back does not hurt him. . . .
>
> Judge Douglas ought to remember, when he is en-

deavoring to force this policy upon the American people, that while he is put up in that way, a good many are not. He ought to remember that there was once in this country a man by the name of Thomas Jefferson, supposed to be a Democrat. . . . In contemplation of this thing, we all know he was led to exclaim, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just!"

Were Lincoln living to-day, a witness of the autocratic methods of enslaving and absorbing whole populations accustomed to and loving the liberty of self-government, it is easy to fancy the moral elevation of his words in condemnation of the presumptuous insolence of such a tragic and barbarous policy.

On the next day, September 17, Lincoln, following Douglas, spoke at Cincinnati. His address there contained words of courageous and far-sighted implication. They seem to us to-day to have been, by suggestion, a forecast of historic events soon to follow. Addressing himself to the people of his native State, he said:

I say, then, in the first place, to the Kentuckians, that I am what they call, as I understand it, a "Black Republican." I think slavery is wrong, morally and politically. I desire that it should be no further spread

in these United States, and I should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union.

* * * * * *

In the first place, we know that a government like this, a government of the people, where the voice of all men of the country, substantially, enters into the administration of the government, what lies at the bottom of all of it is public opinion.

* * * * * *

Upon this subject of moulding public opinion, I call your attention to the fact—for a well established fact it is—that the judge never says your institution of slavery is wrong; he never says it is right, to be sure, but he never says it is wrong . . . for a man may say, when he sees nothing wrong in a thing, that he does not care whether it be voted up or voted down; but no man can logically say that he cares not whether a thing goes up or down which appears to him to be wrong.

* * * * * *

There is one other thing I will say to you in this relation. . . . It is my opinion that it is for you to take him [Douglas] or be defeated; and that if you do take him, you may be beaten. You will surely be beaten if you do not take him. We, the Republicans and others forming the opposition of the country, intend to "stand by our guns," to be patient and firm, and in the long run to beat you whether you take him

or not. We know that before we can fairly beat you, we have to beat you both together.

* * * * * *

We mean to treat you, as near as we possibly can, as Washington, Jefferson, and Madison treated you. We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institution; to abide by all and every compromise of the Constitution. . . . We mean to remember that you are as good as we; that there is no difference between us, other than the difference of circumstances.

* * * * * *

I have told you what we mean to do. I want to know, now, when that thing takes place, what do you mean to do? I often hear it intimated that you mean to divide the Union whenever a Republican or anything like it is elected President of the United States. (A voice: "That is so.") "That is so," one of them says. I wonder if he is a Kentuckian. (A voice: "He is a Douglas man.") Well, then, I want to know what you are going to do with your half of it? . . . Are you going to build a wall some way between your country and ours? . . . Will you make war upon us and kill us all? Why, gentlemen, I think you are as gallant and as brave men as live . . . but man for man, you are not better than we are, and there are not so many of you as there are of us. You will never make much of a hand of whipping us. . . . If we were

equal, it would likely be a drawn battle; but being inferior in numbers, you make nothing by attempting to master us.

* * * * * *

After saying this much, let me say a little on the other side. There are plenty of men in the slave States that are altogether good enough for me to be either President or Vice-President, provided they will profess their sympathy with our purpose, and will place themselves on such ground that our men, upon principle, can vote for them. There are scores of them—good men in their character for intelligence, and talent, and integrity. I should be glad to have some of the many . . . noble men of the South to place themselves where we can confer upon them the high honor of an election upon one or the other end of our ticket. It would do my soul good to do that thing.

A subtle trait of Lincoln's talent for expression was his disposition to strip a matter of controversy free from all confusing elements, to reduce it to alternatives. He loved to isolate an idea, and, as nearly as he could, give to it the final phrasing. This is the method of the creators of literature; but in argument, Lincoln made it direct and strictly rational. "There are two ways of establishing a proposition," he said at Columbus. "One is by trying to

demonstrate it upon reason, and the other is, to show that great men in former times have thought so and so, and thus to pass it by weight of pure authority. Now, if Judge Douglas will demonstrate somehow that this is popular sovereignty—the right of one man to make a slave of another, without any right in that other, or any one else, to object—demonstrate it as Euclid demonstrated propositions—there is no objection. But when he comes forward, seeking to carry a principle by bringing to it the authority of men who themselves utterly repudiate that principle, I ask that he shall not be permitted to do it." At Cincinnati he gave a very concrete illustration of his bias for reducing his opponent's argument to an absurdity by putting it in the form of a mathematical proportion. Douglas had stated at Memphis the year before, and repeatedly afterward, that in all contests between the negro and the white man, he was for the white man, but in all questions between the negro and the crocodile he was for the negro. Lincoln resolved his statement into the following proposition:

As the negro is to the white man, so is the crocodile to the negro; and as the negro may rightfully treat the crocodile as a beast or reptile, so the white man may rightfully treat the negro as a beast or reptile.

"That," he said, "is really the point of all that argument of his."

The views of the two men on the economics of slave labor were irreconcilable. Douglas implied that to free the negro would be prejudicial to the white man. There is no proof that he ever made a serious study of the question. Nor is there proof that Lincoln investigated the subject at first hand and in detail. He raised the question at Cincinnati and maintained that Douglas's assumption was false. He held there was no necessary conflict between the white man and the negro, that there was "room enough for us all to be free," and that "the mass of white men are really injured by the effects of slave-labor in the vicinity of their own labor." He denied the assumption of some men that, among the laboring class, the condition of slaves was better than that of hired laborers. The condition of the hired laborer was superior because he had the ability to become an employer.[1]

Two weeks later, Lincoln, in an interesting and

1 During the following year, 1860, in his Cooper Institute lecture, Lincoln mentions Helper's "The Impending Crisis," which he probably read soon after its appearance in 1857. It was the most elaborate study of the effects of slavery upon white labor available at the time. Lincoln's economic theory was never developed beyond the brief statements contained in his first annual message to Congress, his reply to a Committee of New York Workingmen, March 21, 1864, and in his letter to Colfax, April 4, 1865.

well-written address before the Wisconsin Agricultural Society, at Milwaukee, was able to state his views of labor and capital with greater clearness. He distinguished between the "mud-sill" theory held by those who assumed that the hired laborer, being "fatally fixed in that condition for life," was as bad off, or worse, than the slave, and the theory of those who, like himself, held "that labor is prior to, and independent of, capital—that, in fact, capital is the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed; that labor can exist without capital, but that capital could never have existed without labor. Hence they hold that labor is the superior—greatly the superior—of capital." He conceded that there was a "relation between labor and capital." A "few men own capital" and "hire or buy another few to labor for them," but a "large majority belong to neither class of hirers nor hired," men who "with their families . . . work for themselves . . . taking the whole product to themselves, and asking no favors" of capital or labor. Against the "old general rule . . . that educated people did not perform manual labor," he described "the just, generous, and prosperous system" of a "prudent, penniless beginner in the world" who by labor acquires property for himself

and "at length hires another beginner to help him."

With this system of "free labor," how could education be "most satisfactorily combined?" The "mud-sill" theory assumed "that labor and education are incompatible;" that the education of laborers was useless and dangerous, for the heads of laborers contained "explosive materials" to be kept as far as possible away "from that peculiar sort of fire which ignites them." On the other hand "the Author of man . . . probably intended that heads and hands should coöperate as friends," that the head should direct and control the hands and the mouth "inseparably connected with it; and that being so, every head should be cultivated and improved by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge. In a word, free labor insists on universal education."

In relation to agriculture, he believed that "book-learning is available." He advised a knowledge of botany and mechanics. "Chemistry assists in the analysis of soils, selection and application" of fertilizers, and in other ways. He advised intensive cultivation of the soil in preference to extensive farming. He looked upon education as "cultivated thought," best combined with "any labor, on the principle of thorough work;" and he looked forward

to the time when the "pressure of population would cause to be esteemed as the most valuable of all arts" that "of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of the soil. No community whose every member possesses this art, can ever be the victim of oppression in any of its forms. Such a community will be alike independent of crowned kings, money kings, and land kings."

Lincoln did not speak so much upon the technic of agriculture, for which he would not have been fitted, as upon the practical philosophy and civil significance of the art. He believed that a large farming population of free, intelligent people, tending constantly to become property owners, was a safeguard against political and economic tyranny. This was part and parcel of his ideals of democracy as against social privilege. The political obstacles to democracy he knew to be the more immediate and menacing. This he had indicated a few months before, in a rather brilliant letter in response to an invitation to attend, in Boston, a festival in honor of the birthday of Thomas Jefferson.[1] "The principles of Jefferson," he said, "are the definitions and axioms of free society. And yet they are denied and evaded, with no small show of success.

1 Letter to H. L. Pierce and others, April 6, 1859.

One dashingly calls them 'glittering generalities.' Another bluntly calls them 'self-evident lies.' And others insinuously argue that they apply to 'superior races.'" These expressions, differing in form, are identical in object and effect—the supplanting of the principles of free government, and restoring those of classification, caste, and legitimacy. They would delight a convocation of crowned heads plotting against the people. They are the vanguard, the miners and sappers of returning despotism. We must repulse them or they will subjugate us. This is a world of compensation, and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. If Lincoln had sought to unite his industrial and political philosophy in a single conception, perhaps he could not have given it a more splendid statement than he gave to the beautiful sentence with which he closed his high-minded address at Milwaukee:[1]

Let us hope, rather, that by the best cultivation of the physical world beneath and around us, and the best intellectual and moral world within us, we shall secure an individual, social, and political prosperity

1 It is remarkable that Lincoln, in his Wisconsin address, spoke with such clearness upon the very aims in agriculture which were subsequently to be promoted by his Presidency, in the land grants of 1862, and later, in the establishment within the States of colleges of agriculture and mechanical arts.

and happiness, whose course shall be onward and upward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away.

Here we have a clear note of that individual style which Lincoln's remarkable experience as a writer and public speaker was gradually fashioning. Spiritually, he was yet to be perfected through suffering. But his mind had already stood the stiff tests of courage and sympathy, of severe study and patience, of faith in the essential nobility and aspiration of human nature. The individuality of that style likewise was yet to be perfected. His experience was to be extended and his mind mellowed by a crisis far more vast and refining than lay in the intellectual adventure with Stephen A. Douglas. His prose had already felt, at points in his recent development, the heart-borne elevation which was to sustain and distinguish the Gettysburg Address, and which culminated in the music of that "sacred poem" which we know as the Second Inaugural.[1]

1 Carl Schurz spoke of Lincoln's Second Inaugural as a "sacred poem," in his essay, "Abraham Lincoln."

CHAPTER VI

EAST AND WEST MEET AT COOPER INSTITUTE

The great difference between a real statesman and the pretender is, that the one sees into the future, while the other regards only the present; the one lives by the day, and acts on expediency; the other acts on enduring principles and for immortality.—*Burke.*

By 1859, when Lincoln and Douglas participated in the Ohio campaign, the feeling between the North and South had become perilously unfriendly. Douglas was fast losing the support of the Southern Democrats. Jefferson Davis, typical of Southern political sentiment, openly broke with him in the Senate, and contemplated a movement of independence for the States of his section.[1] A schism in the Democratic party was inevitable. Both Davis and Alexander H. Stephens were favorable to the reviving of the African slave-trade, prohibited by Congress in 1818 and made a piracy two years later. President Buchanan inclined to the side of the slave-holding statesmen; or, perhaps, through the lack of personal strength and a policy of his own, de-

1 See Rhodes, "History of the United States, from the Compromise of 1850," II., chap. x, for a full exposition of this period.

ferred to their views.[1] Sectionalism, menacing and defiant, was rapidly overwhelming statesmanship in Congress.

For want of a dominant mind and personality in control, the federal government was drifting before the gathering storm of disunion. The John Brown raid deepened the feeling of hostility. The press of the land was arrayed on one side or the other in the impending cleavage over slavery. The church was soon to be riven; and scholarship and public opinion throughout the country, violently disturbed by the time-worn contention, were settling down to a definite and irrevocable party alignment destined to be made the immediate occasion of secession.

As the old-line Democracy divided, the Republican party consolidated under the impulse of new leadership. Seward in the East and Lincoln in the West were its ablest interpreters. Of the two, Seward was regarded both in the North and the South as the probable Republican nominee for President. Davis had called him "the master mind" of his party.[2] His speech at Rochester on the "irrepressible conflict" had declared that the United States must become "either entirely a slave-holding nation

1 Ibid., pp. 349-350, 372. 2 Ibid., p. 345.

or entirely a free-labor nation."[1] This was the Lincoln doctrine in the Springfield speech of the same year, 1858. Each of the men had worked out the doctrine independently. Seward was openly a candidate for the honor. Lincoln had said he would support any good man, North or South, assuredly loyal to Republican principles. He wrote that he felt kindly to Chase, and further: "I must say I do not think myself fit for the presidency."[2] Later he wrote (December 9, 1859): "You know I am pledged to not enter a struggle with him [Trumbull] for the seat in the Senate now occupied by him; and yet I would rather have a full term in the Senate than in the presidency."[3]

1 During Lincoln's speech at Cincinnati in September, 1859, he quoted the phrase "irrepressible conflict." A voice in the audience intimated that the phrase was original with him, not with Seward. Lincoln replied: "Neither I, nor Seward, nor Hickman, is entitled to the enviable or unenviable distinction of having first expressed that idea. That same idea was expressed by the *Richmond Enquirer* in Virginia, in 1856, quite two years before it was expressed by the first of us." He referred to the *Enquirer* and its editor, Roger A. Pryor, again, in the same connection, in his speech at New Haven, in March, 1860.

2 Letter to Samuel Galloway, July 28, 1859.

3 Letter to N. B. Judd, December 9, 1859.

On April 16, Lincoln had written to T. J. Pickett, of Rock Island, a newspaper friend who wished to announce his name for the Presidency, as follows: "As to the other matter you kindly mention, I must in candor say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency. . . . I really think it best for our cause that no concerted effort, such as you suggest, should be made. Let this be considered confidential."

Yet Lincoln was already being seriously thought of in connection with the Republican nomination of 1860 by party leaders, particularly in his own State. He had added to his reputation in Ohio, where Chase was the leading party man. In the closing month of 1859, in response to solicitations, he gave a number of addresses at different points in Kansas. Only fragments of these addresses survive, but they are full enough to afford a clear indication of what he said. His Kansas speeches interpreted Douglas's popular sovereignty thus: "If one man would enslave another, neither that other nor any third man has a right to object." He followed up Douglas's article in "Harper's Magazine," as at Columbus; he defined the Republican policy as opposed to the further spread of slavery and to the revival of African slave-trade. "Douglas's position," he argued, "leads to the nationalization of slavery as surely as does that of Jeff Davis and Mason of Virginia. The two positions are but slightly different roads to the same place—with this difference, that the nationalization of slavery can be reached by Douglas's route, and never can be by the other." He urged party leaders to organize: "hold conventions, select candidates, and carry elections. At every step we must be true to the main

purpose. . . . And as to men for leaders, we must remember that 'He that is not for us is against us; and he that gathereth not with us, scattereth.'"

The mental state of the nation in 1860 was unfavorable to almost any form of literature outside of what contained a political tang. It was a period when much was written and spoken. Both verse and prose were written, but the literary consciousness as such was stayed by the electric atmosphere of the national tempest which all felt was imminent. Education, religion, and literature, alike suffered partial eclipse; these, like the business interests of the nation, stood for the time being in abeyance, waiting the fresh resiliency that was to come with a restored Union. Speeches, news, and comment were in great request by readers of every class. Buchanan's administration, with its ineptitude in administering the government, was soon to close, and all parties were awaiting anxiously the results of the forthcoming national conventions. The utterances of those most competent to fathom and offer a solution to the unhappy political incertitude was the literature most eagerly sought. Lincoln's speeches and debates had already been published in Ohio and were used to influence public opinion. In 1860, the demand for his speeches was strong, and

an edition was published at Columbus, Ohio. Of this edition there were various issues. In the case of some, from fifteen to thirty thousand copies were said to have been sold.[1]

Lincoln's Illinois friends were busy with plans to promote his candidacy. Jesse W. Fell, corresponding secretary of the Republican Central Committee, assured him of the increasing demand for his nomination, and procured from him a few paragraphs of autobiography. The composition, in style and content reflecting his humble life and opportunities, was too apologetic for the purpose, and some months afterward he furnished, as the basis of a campaign biography, an autobiographic sketch written with more detail and dignity. On February 16, the *Chicago Tribune* editorially endorsed Lincoln's nomination, and Norman B. Judd, member of the Republican National Committee for Illinois, managed to secure the convention for Chicago.[2] Even yet Lincoln's following was slight outside of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Iowa.[3] An event took place, however, which gave him immediate distinction in the East. On February 27, 1860, in response to an invitation he had received to deliver a lecture

1 Sparks, Illinois Historical Collections, III:592.
2 Tarbell, I:339.
3 Rhodes, II:458.

in Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn, he gave, instead of a lecture at Plymouth church, an address at Cooper Institute in New York.[1] This great address was pivotal for the East, where the sentiment had strongly favored the nomination of Seward.

Over three months had elapsed between the invitation (in October, 1859) and the delivery of the address. During the interval he gave much time to its preparation. "He searched through the dusty volumes of congressional proceedings in the State library, and dug deeply into political history. He was painstaking and thorough in the study of his subject, but when at last he left for New York, we had many misgivings—and he not a few himself —of his success in the great metropolis." [2]

Lincoln spoke to "a great audience, including all the noted men—all the learned and cultured—of his party in New York: editors, clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, critics. They were all very curious to hear him. His fame as a powerful speaker had preceded him, and exaggerated rumor of his wit—the worst forerunner of an orator—had reached the East. When Mr. Bryant presented him, on a high platform of the Cooper Institute, a vast

1 Page 233, Appendix. 2 Herndon, III:454.

sea of eager upturned faces greeted him, full of intense curiosity to see what this rude child of the people was like. . . . When he spoke he was transformed. . . . For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand. His style of speech and manner of delivery were severely simple. What Lowell called 'the grand simplicities of the Bible,' with which he was so familiar, were reflected in his discourse. With no attempt at ornament or rhetoric, without parade or pretence, he spoke straight to the point."[1]

In conception and content the Cooper Institute Address is remarkable. It was perhaps the best fortified as well as the most convincing and effective political address of an argumentative nature before an American audience up to that time. It aimed to promote the popular endorsement of the Republican

1 Joseph H. Choate, "Abraham Lincoln," an address before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, 1900.

Previous to his announcement for the Legislature, Lincoln had served as captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk war. During that year, 1832, William Cullen Bryant came west to visit his brothers, who had settled near Jacksonville, Ill. The poet's biographers have told a story of his being introduced to a "raw youth" of quaint and pleasing speech by the name of Captain Abraham Lincoln. The story was interesting from the fact that it fell to the poet-editor to introduce Lincoln to his Cooper Institute audience, twenty-eight years afterward. Miss Tarbell explodes the story, 1 : 80, 81. It illustrates how easily a "Washington hatchet" myth may spring up around a life that has become famous. Bryant's most interesting legacy from his western trip is his poem, "The Prairies," finely descriptive of "the unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful."

party at the next national election. It sought to confirm in the faith of that party any who were doubtful which of the parties or principles it would be wiser to support. It purposed to show a distinct and unanswerable difference in goal between the Douglas policy and that maintained by the Republicans. Moreover, it intended to disarm the leaders of the South of disunion arguments, to present with exactness the attitude of Lincoln's party toward slavery, and to inspire the nation with confidence in the high moral purpose and sense of justice which he believed to be the soul of that attitude.

Lincoln's unusual capacity for research and exposition is fully shown in his answer to a statement made by Douglas at Columbus, Ohio:

> Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now.

This statement Lincoln endorsed. Then he proceeded to show from historical facts that "our fathers" had actually favored the opinion that Congress possessed the power to prohibit slavery in the Territories. He showed that certain of the "thirty-nine" men who framed and signed the Constitution participated, as members of Congress under the Articles of Confederation, in framing the Ordinance

of 1784 and the Ordinance of 1787, and voted for the provision against slavery in the Northwest Territory. Only one of these six men had voted against the anti-slavery proviso. He pointed out that, in the first Congress under the Constitution, the sixteen members who had been among the "thirty-nine" voted unanimously "to enforce the ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory"; that President Washington, another of the "thirty-nine," signed the bill. Subsequent history disclosed the probability or the fact that members of the "thirty-nine" surviving in Congress had voted for laws to control the relation of slavery to the Territory of Mississippi and the Louisiana purchase. The last act of Congress on Federal control of slavery in which signers of the Constitution voted was the Missouri Compromise. Here the two survivors divided for and against on that measure. The question which Douglas had raised was the attitude of the Fathers on the constitutional division of local and Federal control of slavery in the Territories. Douglas maintained that the Fathers favored local control; Lincoln showed conclusively that twenty-one out of the twenty-three Fathers who acted on the question, had voted favorably for Federal control, while none of the sixteen

others, including Franklin, Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris, was known to be unfavorable to Federal control. None of these was known to be favorable to slavery, "unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina."

In similar manner he punctured the reasoning of the Supreme Court, which based the Dred Scott decision upon the Fifth amendment, and Douglas's intrenchment behind the Tenth amendment, by showing that these amendments were "in progress toward maturity" under the same Congress which voted to enforce the Ordinance of 1787. He demonstrated the inconsistency of the South in calling for congressional authority to revive the slave-trade, or in supporting "popular sovereignty," and at the same time opposing the right of Congress under the Constitution to prohibit slavery in the Territories. He quoted Jefferson's hope of the ultimate emancipation of the slaves, maintained the impossibility of the South's charge of connection between the Republicans and the John Brown raid, and explained what must, it seems, become the historic feeling upon that episode. "John Brown's effort," he said, "was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to par-

ticipate. . . . An enthusiast broods over the oppression of the people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. . . . Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon, and John Brown's attempt at Harpers Ferry were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on Old England in the one case, and on New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things."

In 1837, when Lincoln was twenty-eight years old, he had eloquently pleaded for the enforcement of the laws and respect for them. In the debates with Douglas, he had insisted on fidelity to the constitutional provision for a fugitive slave law. He deprecated, now, on the same principle of observance of the law, the attempt of John Brown and his associates to fly into its face in an effort to subvert a system they regarded as iniquitous. His opposition to the South's desire to extend slavery would require him at the same time to oppose the acts of northern States to obstruct the return of slaves escaped from their owners. But his position in favor of law observance would not justify the South in maintaining against him that the Supreme Court decision had supported the desire of the South to extend slavery to Federal Territories in spite of

Congress, for the "bare majority of the judges" in that decision "disagree with one another in the reasons for making it." The decision was "mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact—the statement . . . that the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution." Since the Constitution contains no such affirmation as the Court asserts, Lincoln held it would doubtless reconsider the decision based upon it.

Lincoln closed his Cooper Union Address by arguing that the South, now threatening disunion, would not be satisfied with the unconditional surrender of the Territories; it would eventually demand the overthrow of free-State constitutions which forbid slavery. This his party could not grant, because it believed slavery to be wrong. But in the face of the wrong, the party could afford to "let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation"; but a sense of duty called for opposition to its spread to the Territories. "Let us not be slandered from our duty by false accusations. . . . Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

The address deeply impressed the East. Toward

Lincoln, its effect "was to dispel every thought of anything but an earnest, high-minded, scholarly man, bred to the knowledge of the republic's history and political institutions, who has mastered the problem that tormented the nation and made the conflict of sections seem not far away."[1] Greeley in the *Tribune* and Bryant in the *Evening Post* spoke in high terms of it. "I do not hesitate," wrote Greeley, shortly after the Civil War, "to pronounce it the very best political address to which I ever listened —and I have heard some of Webster's grandest."[2] The address was reproduced as a campaign document. In September, an edition, carefully annotated, was published by Charles C. Nott and Cephas Brainard of the New York bar, who were members of the committee that arranged for its delivery. The preface to their edition said:[3]

No one who has not actually attempted to verify its details can understand the patient research and historical labor which it embodies. . . . Neither can any one who has not travelled over this precise ground appreciate the accuracy of every detail, or the self-denying impartiality with which Mr. Lincoln has turned from the testimony of "the Fathers," on the

1 Oberholtzer, "Abraham Lincoln," p. 136.
2 Rhodes, II:431.
3 Putnam, "Abraham Lincoln," pp. 233, 234.

general question of slavery, to present the single question which he discusses. From the first line to the last—from his premises to his conclusion, he travels with swift, unerring directness which no logician ever excelled. . . . A single, easy, simple sentence of plain Anglo-Saxon words contains a chapter of history that, in some instances, has taken days of labor to verify and which must have cost the author months of investigation to acquire. And, though the public should justly estimate the labor bestowed on the facts which are stated, they cannot estimate the greater labor involved on those which are omitted—how many pages have been read—how many works examined—what numerous statutes, resolutions, speeches, letters, and biographies have been looked through. Commencing with this address as a political pamphlet, the reader will leave it as an historical work—brief, complete, profound, impartial, truthful—which will survive the time and the occasion that called it forth, and be esteemed hereafter no less for its intrinsic worth than its unpretending modesty.

To his New York audience, Lincoln's address was a revelation of fresh strength and hope for America. No one before him had assembled the facts and ideals of the republic into a declaration so compact of knowledge and persuasion, so profoundly relevant to the supreme issue of the time.

His words were simple, sincere, and cheering. Here was a new and unexpected pilot, with chart and compass in his hand, with direction in his mind, speaking the decisive word in a moment of cloud and confusion. Strong men heard him, and went away to deliberate upon his message. The people read his words, and saw in them a higher meaning the more they reflected. They felt there was character in what he said, and a fair promise of success in what he proposed. There was something dawning in his lofty earnestness; and his conclusions were clear, far-seeing, and fraught with insight. He seemed to many to be the only man in the nation whose courage, integrity, and comprehension gave ample assurance against rashness in action, a sufficient and steady wisdom for the present task. The Cooper Institute Address is not Lincoln's masterpiece, but it is a substantial contribution to our literature of knowledge and power.[1]

From New York Lincoln went to New Hampshire to visit his son Robert, then a student in the academy at Exeter, preparing for Harvard. He

1 On January 19, 1860, during the interval between the invitation to speak in New York and the delivery of the Cooper Institute Address, Lincoln wrote a notable letter to A. H. Stephens, interpreting the constitutional history of the country, and evidently designed to strengthen the weak knees of the latter. It is to be found in Tracy's "Unpublished Letters of Abraham Lincoln," p. 85 ff.

had made speeches in New England, during his term in Congress, in support of General Taylor's candidacy for President of the United States. At that time his most notable speech was made in Tremont Temple, Boston, following an address by Mr. Seward. During this visit of 1860, he was called for and spoke at various points in New Hampshire and Connecticut. His speeches contained a popular flavor, but were well spoken of by the press. His address at Hartford, March 5, seems ill-considered: it has the manner of a superficial stump-speech. True, it contains many facts he had often used, but they are loosely put together, and the speech breathes the language of hurried preparation for the event, or no preparation at all. The speech at New Haven is more coherent in form and substance; it contains several paragraphs from the New York Address. For the rest, it is reminiscent of the less formal side of the debates with Douglas. Both at Hartford and New Haven he referred to the local shoemakers' strike, then in progress, as an occasion to discuss, in a surface way, the antagonism between free and slave labor. The subject was considered, not on economic grounds, but with the aim, apparently, of stimulating Republican votes.

Lincoln made friends for himself and his cause

in New England. The press reports of his speeches were usually highly complimentary. The unpolished manner was observed by his audiences, but there was something contagious about what he said. He was commended for his substance so highly that his awkwardness and informality were ascribed, at least by many, to native good humor and unconventionality. This was essentially correct. It is a tribute to the good sense of his reporters that they could say, "He fortified every position assumed by proofs which it is impossible to gainsay; and while his speech was at intervals enlivened by remarks which elicited applause at the expense of the Democratic party, there was, nevertheless, not a single word which tended to impair the dignity of the speaker, or weaken the force of the great truths he uttered."[1] Or, again: "He indulges in no flowers of rhetoric, no eloquent passages; he is not a wit, a humorist or a clown; yet, so great a vein of pleasantry and good nature pervades what he says, gliding over a deep current of practical argument, that he keeps his hearers in a smiling good mood with their mouths open, ready to swallow all he says."

Interesting light on the appreciation accorded to Lincoln in New England as well as on his method

1 Tarbell, I:330, 331.

of self-education is recorded in Francis B. Carpenter's "Six Months at the White House," a source book of permanent importance on Lincoln, written shortly after his assassination by the man commissioned to paint the emancipation picture of the President and his cabinet. Mr. Carpenter reproduces an article written during the war by Rev. J. P. Gulliver, of Norwich, Conn., and published in *The Independent* of September 1, 1864. On the morning after Lincoln made his speech at Norwich (March 9, 1860), Mr. Gulliver met Lincoln at the railway station, where he was engaged in conversation with the mayor of the city.

On being introduced to him, writes Mr. Gulliver, he fixed his eyes upon me and said: "I have seen you before, sir!" "I think not," I replied; "you must mistake me for some other person." "No, I don't; I saw you at the Town Hall, last evening." "Is it possible, Mr. Lincoln, that you could observe individuals so closely in such a crowd?" "Oh, yes!" he replied, laughing; "that is my way. I don't forget faces. Were you not there?" "I was, sir, and I was well paid for going;" adding, somewhat in the vein of pleasantry he had started, "I consider it one of the most extraordinary speeches I ever heard."

As we entered the cars, he beckoned me to take a seat with him, and said in a most agreeably frank

way, "Were you sincere in what you said about my speech just now?" "I meant every word of it, Mr. Lincoln. Why, an old dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, who sat near me, applauded you repeatedly, and when rallied upon his conversion to sound principles, answered, 'I don't believe a word he says, but I can't help clapping him, he is so pat!' That I call the triumph of oratory. . . . Indeed, sir, I learned more of the art of public speaking last evening than I could from a whole course of lectures on Rhetoric."

"Ah! that reminds me," said he, "of a most extraordinary circumstance which occurred at New Haven the other day. They told me that the Professor of Rhetoric in Yale College,—a very learned man, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir, and a fine critic, too."

"Well, I suppose so; he ought to be, at any rate. They told me that he came to hear me, and took notes of my speech, and gave a lecture on it to his class the next day; and, not satisfied with that, he followed me up to Meridian the next evening, and heard me again for the same purpose. Now, if this is so, it is to my mind very extraordinary. I have been sufficiently astonished at my success in the West. It has been most unexpected. But I had no thought of any marked success in the East, and least of all that I should draw out such commendations from literary and learned men. Now," he continued, "I should like very much

to know what it was in my speech you thought so remarkable, and what you suppose interested my friend, the Professor, so much?"

"The clearness of your statements, Mr. Lincoln; the unanswerable style of your reasoning, and especially your illustrations, which were romance and pathos and fun and logic all welded together. That story about the snakes, for example, which set the hands and feet of your Democratic hearers in such vigorous motion, was at once queer and comical, tragic and argumentative. It broke through all the barriers of a man's previous opinions and prejudices at a crash, and blew up the very citadel of his false theories before he could know what had hurt him."

In response to Mr. Gulliver's inquiry how he had acquired his unusual power of "putting things," and suggesting that it must have been through education, Lincoln replied:

"Well, as to education, the newspapers are correct; I never went to school more than six months in my life. But as you say, this must be a product of culture in some form. . . . I can say this, that among my earliest recollections I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in my life. . . . I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing

the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down, trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their—to me—dark sayings. I could not sleep . . . until I had caught it . . . until I put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. . . . I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it North, and bounded it South, and bounded it East, and bounded it West. Perhaps that accounts for the characteristic you observe in my speeches, though I never put the two things together before."

"Mr. Lincoln, I thank you for this. It is the most splendid educational fact I ever happened upon."

Replying to Gulliver's desire to know how he had prepared for his profession, Lincoln stated that he had been a lawyer's clerk at Springfield, had copied "tedious documents," and had picked up what law he could "in the intervals of other work."

"But your question reminds me of a bit of education I had, which I am bound in honesty to mention. In the course of my law reading, I constantly came upon the word *demonstrate*. I thought at first that I understood its meaning, but soon became satisfied that I did not. I said to myself, 'What do I mean when I *demonstrate* more than when I *reason* or *prove?* How does *demonstration* differ from any other proof?' I

consulted Webster's dictionary. That told of 'certain proof,' 'proof beyond a doubt'; but I could form no idea of what sort of proof that was. . . . I consulted all the dictionaries and books of reference I could find, but with no better results. You might as well have defined *blue* to a blind man. At last I said, 'Lincoln, you can never make a lawyer if you do not understand what *demonstrate* means'; and I left my situation in Springfield, went home to my father's house, and stayed there till I could give any proposition in the six books of Euclid at sight. I then found out what *demonstrate* means, and went back to my law studies." [1]

The interview with Lincoln was concluded with a reference to assertions he had made regarding "the demoralizing influences of Washington upon northern politicians in respect to the slavery question." Mr. Gulliver said there was one other matter he wished to mention.

"Mr. Lincoln, . . . You have become, by the controversy with Douglas, one of our leaders in this great

1 The reader will observe a discrepancy between this report of Gulliver and Lincoln's own autobiographical statement that he studied Euclid after his term in Congress (1846-48). The statement that Lincoln returned to his father's house to study Euclid has not been verified. We know that Lincoln studied law at New Salem; that he studied Kirkham's Grammar and Flint and Gibson's treatise on surveying there also, under the tutelage of Mentor Graham, the neighborhood schoolmaster. Mr. Henry B. Rankin told the writer that Graham claimed to have instructed Lincoln in Euclid also.

struggle with slavery, which is undoubtedly *the* struggle of the nation and the age. What I would like to say is this, and I say it with a full heart, Be true to your principles and we will be true to you, and God will be true to us all!" His homely face lighted up instantly with a beaming expression, and taking my hand warmly in both of his, he said: "I say *Amen* to that—*Amen* to that!"

Lincoln was now a national figure to be reckoned with by local leaders of his party. He received many letters from men friendly to his nomination for the Presidency. He was not averse to the possibility before him, yet he felt conservatively about it. Typical of his feeling was his letter of March 24, 1860, to Samuel Galloway, assuring him of the esteem in which he was held in Ohio:

Of course I am gratified to know I have friends in Ohio who are disposed to give me the highest evidence of their friendship and confidence. Mr. Parrott, of the legislature, has written me to the same effect. If I have any chance, it consists mainly in the fact that the whole opposition would vote for me, if nominated. (I don't mean to include the pro-slavery opposition of the South, of course.) My name is new in the field, and I suppose I am not the first choice of a very great many. Our policy, then, is to give no

offense to others—leave them in a mood to come to us if they shall be compelled to give up their first love. This, too, is dealing justly with all, and leaving us in a mood to support heartily whoever shall be nominated. I believe I have once before told you that I especially wish to do no ungenerous thing toward Governor Chase, because he gave us his sympathy in 1858 when scarcely any other distinguished man did. Whatever you may do for me, consistently with these suggestions, will be appreciated and gratefully remembered.

May 18, Lincoln was nominated for President by the Republican convention at Chicago, on the third ballot. Seward was his only close competitor. On the next day, at his home in Springfield, he thanked the committee of formal notification from the convention "for the high honor" done him, and expressed his sense of the responsibility it imposed,—"a responsibility which I could almost wish had fallen upon some one of the far more eminent men and experienced statesmen whose distinguished names were before the convention." On the 23rd, he wrote his acceptance in a letter to George Ashmun of the Massachusetts delegation, who was chairman of the convention. This letter was exceedingly apt for the time and the occasion.

SIR: I accept the nomination tendered me by the convention over which you presided, and of which I am formally apprised in the letter of yourself and others, acting as a committee of the convention for that purpose.

The declaration of principles and sentiments which accompanies your letter meets my approval; and it shall be my care not to violate or disregard it in any part.

Imploring the assistance of Divine Providence, and with due regard to the views and feelings of all who were represented in the convention—to the rights of all the States and Territories and people of the nation; to the inviolability of the Constitution; and the perpetual union, harmony, and prosperity of all—I am most happy to coöperate for the practical success of the principles declared by the convention.

Your obliged friend and fellow-citizen,

A. LINCOLN.

This letter was in engaging contrast to the long political discussions contained in the letters of acceptance by Lincoln's two leading opponents for the Presidency. It was in strict keeping with his decision to observe prudence and discretion in his utterances during the political contest. Shortly afterward, he received a friendly letter, advising caution in making promises of any kind, from the

poet, William Cullen Bryant, who had introduced Lincoln at Cooper Institute. "Mr. Bryant's letter contained much political wisdom, and was written in that scholarly style for which he was distinguished. But it could not surpass the simple dignity and grace of Lincoln's reply":[1]

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., June 28, 1860.

Please accept my thanks for the honor done me by your kind letter of the 16th. I appreciate the danger against which you would guard me; nor am I wanting in the *purpose* to avoid it. I thank you for the additional strength your words give me to maintain that purpose.

Your friend and servant,

A. LINCOLN.

As the reader of Lincoln's compositions moves from one to another, he is continually reminded of their sanity and human spirit. Sometimes they are crude and disappointing in statement, sometimes they are sportive, transient, or unstudied in matter. In compositions of some length he is rarely sure and inviolate in manner or in points of detail. In this respect he was like everybody else who has written prose extensively. Somebody has called attention to his accustomed use of the "split infini-

1 Browne, p. 248.

tive." About this, an amusing story is told of a correction suggested to him in the second paragraph of his letter accepting the nomination for the Presidency. He handed the letter to his friend, Dr. Newton Bateman, State Superintendent of Education, with the remark:

"Mr. Schoolmaster," he said, "here is my letter of acceptance. I am not very strong on grammar, and I wish you to see if it is all right. I wouldn't like to have any mistakes in it."

The doctor took the MS. and after reading it, said:

"There is only one change I would suggest, Mr. Lincoln. You have written, 'It shall be my care *to not* violate or disregard it in any part; you should have written, *not to violate*. Never split an infinitive, is the rule."

Mr. Lincoln took the manuscript, regarding it a moment with a puzzled air. "So you think I better put those two little fellows end to end, do you?" he said as he made the change.[1]

Lincoln's fund of ideas outran his resources and technic of speech. In this, too, he was not unlike many another of his fellow mortals.

1 Tarbell, I:361.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE ROAD TO WASHINGTON

And, moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire.

—*Tennyson.*

Naturally, Lincoln's elevation to the responsibility which the Presidency involved opened to him a wide vista of intellectual expansion as novel as it was, at the time, disquieting. There were many sober-minded citizens within his own party who had serious misgivings as to his preparation for the task before him,—a task full of hazard, which called for the most exquisite handling to avoid the shipwreck which already threatened the republic. Few, if any, could realize at the moment the sound character of his preparation and the singleness of purpose that had been evolved in his previous mastery of constitutional history and principles, in his eager and intensive acquaintance with the thought of his contemporaries on both sides of the great question which had long disturbed the nation, and in his

unexampled opportunity to test the actual strength of that preparation against the most resourceful statesman of the opposing party. Moreover, he had tried himself and his views in the presence of those critics he was accustomed to regard as most reliable, the people and the press. This experience had deepened his convictions and had fortified his confidence in himself. As President-elect he approached the infinitely complicated business before him with calm deliberation, with his wonted delicacy of perception and knowledge of men, and above all with the fixed instincts and practice of sincerity and tact in his relations with others.

Between Lincoln's election, November 6, and his inauguration, March 4, seven southern states had severed their relation with the Union and established a confederacy. During this interim, President Buchanan had halted betwixt the opinions of the loyal and disloyal groups of his cabinet advisers. His fourth annual message to Congress contained a dissertation on the danger imminent to the country from prolonged slavery agitation. In this part of his message he supported his genuine union sympathies with citations from Andrew Jackson and James Madison, but he weakly argued that his sworn duty to execute the laws was made impracticable

by the action of federal officials in South Carolina, and threw upon Congress the responsibility of providing more effective legislation to protect the country from dissolution. Warning Congress against the possible emergency of its having to decide the "momentous question, whether you possess the power by force of arms to compel a State to remain in the Union," he forthwith, with the encouragement of a few lines from Madison, concluded that Congress, although possessing many means of preserving the Union "by conciliation," had no authority to do so by "force."[1] The failure of the Crittendon compromise, a sincere but ill-starred effort to prevent disruption by means of a permanent division between free and slave territory, was in all probability due to Lincoln's personal unfriendliness to the "popular sovereignty" feature of the proposal.[2] The brief but ardent attempts of Alexander H. Stephens to forestall secession ended in nothing beyond his brilliant and unanswerable logic, as, for example, before the convention of his own State in January, 1861. The Peace Convention, on the motion of Virginia, likewise came to naught. Sumner and Chase, interpreting the ma-

1 Richardson, "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," V:626 ff.

2 Rhodes, III:290.

jority opinion of the party that had elected Lincoln, set their faces against any peace movement which admitted the further extension of slavery in the territories.[1] Meantime the political leaders of the South, who regarded the North's hostility to slavery as a stigma upon them, acted upon the assumption that complete separation was the only solution of differences that were historic, and which were psychologically past the point of reconciliation.

To Lincoln, in Springfield, quietly and reflectively alive to the posture of public opinion in both North and South, these efforts to compromise the "vexed question" were only attempts to substitute expediency for principle. In a confidential letter to Seward, February 1, he wrote: "I am for no compromise which assists or permits the extension of the institution on soil owned by the nation. And any trick by which the nation is to acquire territory, and then allow some local authority to spread slavery over it, is as obnoxious as any other. I take it that to effect some such result as this, and to put us again on the highroad to a slave empire, is the object of all these proposed compromises." Lincoln had already determined to give shape to the national policy. There must be no change in the fundamen-

1 Ibid., p. 290.

tal position which he had taken at Peoria in 1854—the position to which he had given final phrasing in the house-divided-against-itself speech in Springfield four years later, and which he had successfully held against the acknowledged chieftain of the opposing side. This position it was which had brought him the nomination and the constitutional election of those who believed that it should become the policy of the nation.

In what he committed to paper in the form of letters following his nomination, he was careful to protect himself against misrepresentations. His speeches and debates, he felt, were accessible and contained all that any one needed with respect to his political views. His letters following the election were of similar character. To those who were anxious that he should reassure any whose feelings were disturbed by garbled reports of what he had said, he held that to repeat what was already in print and correctly represented his opinions "would have an appearance of sycophancy and timidity which would excite the contempt of good men and encourage bad ones to clamor the more loudly."[1] His nice sense of political prudence is similarly seen in the closing paragraph of his letter to N. P. Par-

1 Letter to Truman Smith, November 10, 1860.

shall, written ten days after his election: "I am not at liberty to shift my ground—that is out of the question. If I thought a repetition would do any good, I would make it. But in my judgment it would do positive harm. The secessionists *per se*, believing they had alarmed me, would clamor all the louder."

On the subject of secession, about to become an accomplished fact, he had said little. On the very day the Charleston convention met, December 17, Lincoln wrote to Thurlow Weed: "I believe you can pretend to find but little, if anything, in my speeches about secession. But my opinion is, that no State can in any way lawfully get out of the Union without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President and other government functionaries to run the machine as it is." To E. B. Washburne, on the day following South Carolina's ordinance of secession, he wrote: "Please present my respects to the general [Scott], and tell him, confidentially, I shall be obliged to him to be as well prepared as he can to either hold or retake the forts, as the case may require, at and after the inauguration."[1] On the next day, December 22, he wrote to his old-time Whig friend, Alexander H. Stephens,

1 To Mayor David Hunter, December 22, he wrote: "If the forts fall, my judgment is that they are to be retaken."

who in two months more was to become vice-President of the Confederate States, as follows:

Your obliging answer to my short note is just received, and for which please accept my thanks. I fully appreciate the present peril the country is in, and the weight of responsibility on me. Do the people of the South really entertain fears that a Republican administration would, directly or indirectly, interfere with the slaves, or with them about the slaves? If they do, I wish to assure you, as once a friend, and still, I hope, not an enemy, that there is no cause for such fears. The South would be in no more danger in this respect than it was in the days of Washington. I suppose, however, this does not meet the case. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended, while we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. That, I suppose, is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us.

To his trusted friend, Senator Lyman Trumbull, Lincoln did, indeed, confide a letter, containing a statement of his attitude toward the South, for conditional publication. The letter was written on the importunity of General Duff Green, but not entrusted to him, and was to be delivered to him for publicity, provided, first, that Trumbull thought it not unwise to do so "on consultation with our dis-

creet friends"; and secondly, provided that the twelve United States Senators from the States of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, would sign the following declaration to be published conjointly with Lincoln's statement:

We recommend to the people of the States we represent respectively, to suspend all action for the dismemberment of the Union, at least until some act deemed to be violative of our rights shall be done by the incoming administration.[1]

Which of course was never done! Few circumstances in Lincoln's life more fittingly illustrate his consummate skill in handling a delicate situation to the advantage of his cause than this. Had his letter to General Green been given to the public, it would have enlightened it—in addition to the obligation it imposed upon the representatives of the States next to secede—upon two points of general interest only. One of these was, that the President-elect was not averse to the people's having an opportunity to express their will through an amendment to the Constitution (which he himself did not desire); the other matter, copied from the late Republican plat-

1 This single sentence of Lincoln's condenses the burden of A. H. Stephens's remarkable speech before the Georgia convention three weeks later.

form, admitted the right of "each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively," together with a repudiation of any "lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext." Both of these subjects, two months afterward, were embodied in the First Inaugural, and must have been already determined upon for treatment in that address.

The public mind, growing daily more feverish since the national election, became intensely solicitous over the fate of the Union. It eagerly watched for some expression of prospective policy from the man, suddenly drawn from the citizenry of a small western town and as yet unpracticed in statecraft, upon whom any rescue from the critical drift toward disintegration clearly rested. Although not widely announced, the new leader's permanent temper in the execution of his task had been heard. On November 20, to his fellow-townsmen, at a meeting to celebrate his election, he said: "I thank you in common with all those who have thought fit by their votes to endorse the Republican cause. I rejoice with you in the success which has thus far attended that cause. **Yet in all our rejoicings, let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings toward any citizen who by his vote has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all**

American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling."

Literature contains no more golden or precious words. Here was the initial expression of that wonderful charity which was to give endurance to his work as well as immortality to what he said. It was the feeling which was one day to be enshrined in language of faultless beauty, when his spirit had been mellowed by sorrow and service.

There was a distinctive strain of the spiritual and the prescient in Abraham Lincoln. He was in every sense of the word a child of the earth. His reactions were strikingly human. In one accent or another they seem to have touched, for a note of harmony, every chord of individual experience. Whatever share of genius posterity will finally ascribe to him, it will doubtless find a basis for the judgment in his possession of strains both romantic and classic. There were moments when sweetness and tenderness gave charm to what he said or did. He could rise to feelings that were, on the occasion, majestic in manner and effect. Yet he could be ludicrous. He had instincts that were genuinely dramatic. He was by nature a gentleman,—honest, upright, sincerely desirous of self-improvement. Ever thoughtful

A Portrait of Lincoln

Made at Princeton, Illinois, July 4, 1856, by W. H. Masters

of the rights and feelings of others, Lincoln was a man of fine and generous sympathies.

His departure from Springfield for Washington will always be commemorated by the Farewell Address of February 11, 1861. In its one hundred and fifty words, there is no impression of studied effect, but of simple, sincere confession.[1] Springfield and its people were dear to him. His twenty-five years of experience there had been years of long, steady pull upward. He had attained the highest goal of a man's ambition. That was all clear to him now. But there was another and necessary goal ahead of him. It carried with it the burden of the Union. What Washington had begun, he must retrieve and preserve—a greater task. With God "everywhere for good," how could he fail? In his great task, he made it plain that he placed trust in His assistance, and he bade his hearers do likewise. He shared with them his honors; let them share with him the faith that the end should be divinely guided. His words were a fitting sequel to a humble yet aspiring discipline in the stream of the world, a firm and far-seeing outlook upon the high yet somewhat shadowy enterprise ahead of him. The Farewell Address is a piece of literature

1 Page 256, Appendix.

which may well nourish youth and delight old age. It is fertile with the unaffected culture of human life and of religion.[1]

The thirty or more short addresses which Lincoln made between his Illinois home and the national capital were given, for the most part, according to a prearranged schedule. His purpose was, not so much to disclose his general line of policy after the inauguration, as to inspire the feeling of unity and loyalty of the northern people upon whom he must depend to sustain him in whatever action events might call out. At Indianapolis he told his audience that, in the trying position in which he would be placed, his reliance would be upon the people of the United States; "and I wish you to remember, now and forever, that it is your business, and not mine; that if the union of these States and the liberties of this people shall be lost, it is but little to any one man of fifty-two years of age, but a great deal to the thirty millions of people who inhabit these United States, and to their posterity in all coming time. It is your business to rise up and preserve the Union and liberty for yourselves, and not for me. . . . Shall the Union and shall the liberties

1 There exists a number of different versions of the Farewell Address. That of Nicolay and Hay is the standard.

of this country be preserved to the latest generations?"

Here was a direct and powerful appeal for the conscious and united support of all who held that the welfare of the nation rested upon those whose ideal for the United States was that of a free and self-governing people. Before the legislature of Indiana he discussed "coercion" and "invasion,"—words then on the tongues of many. He disclaimed any intention to force the South Carolinians to submit. However, he asked, would it be "invasion" or "coercion" for the United States to "hold and retake its own forts and other property," to collect its duties, or to "withhold the mails from places where they were habitually violated"? In Cincinnati he reminded the audience of his speech there in reply to Douglas, and pertinently quoted what he had said on that occasion to the Kentuckians, and added: "Fellow-citizens of Kentucky!—friends!—brethren! may I call you in my new position? I see no occasion, and feel no inclination, to retract a word of this. If it shall not be made good, be assured the fault shall not be mine."[1]

One of the most appropriate speeches he made *en route* was his response to the unexpected appear-

1 See p. 80 for what Lincoln had said at Cincinnati.

ance of a delegation of two thousand German workingmen of Cincinnati, whose spokesman addressed him as the champion of free labor and free homesteads, and concluded: "We firmly adhere to the principles which directed our votes in your favor. We trust that you, the self-reliant because self-made man, will uphold the Constitution and the laws against secret treachery and avowed treason. If to this end you should be in need of men, the German free workingmen, with others, will rise as one man at your call, ready to risk their lives in the effort to maintain the victory already won by freedom over slavery." In reply, Lincoln deemed it his duty to "wait until the last moment for a development of the present national difficulties before I express myself decidedly as to what course I shall pursue. I hope, then, not to be false to anything that you have to expect of me." He agreed that workingmen are the basis of all governments, and that a man's duty is "to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating mankind. . . . In regard to the homestead law . . . so far as the government lands can be disposed of, I am in favor of cutting up the wild lands into parcels, so that every poor man may have a home. In regard to Germans and foreigners, I esteem them no better than other peo-

ple, nor any worse. It is not my nature, when I see a people borne down by the weight of their shackles—the oppression of tyranny—to make their life more bitter. . . . Rather would I do all in my power to raise the yoke than to add anything that would tend to crush them."

To the legislature at Columbus, Ohio, the President-elect said that he had not maintained silence from any want of anxiety. "It is a good thing that there is no more than anxiety, for there is nothing going wrong. It is a consoling circumstance that when we look out, there is nothing that really hurts anybody. We entertain different views upon political questions, but nobody is suffering anything. This is a most consoling circumstance, and from it we may conclude that all we want is time, patience, and a reliance on God who has never forsaken this people." These remarks, spoken "altogether extemporaneously," were employed in detached phrases by the press and persons unfriendly to him, to show, as Miss Tarbell says, that Lincoln "did not grasp the situation." Only six weeks before, the most brilliant statesman of the South, Alexander H. Stephens, in an address to stay his own State from the act of secession, had said: "Pause, I entreat you, and consider for a moment what reasons you can

give, that will even satisfy yourselves in calmer moments—what reasons you can give to your fellow-sufferers in the calamity that it will bring upon us. What reasons can you give to the nations of the earth to justify it? They will be the calm and deliberate judges in the case; and what cause or one overt act can you name or point, on which to rest the plea of justification? What right has the North assailed? What interest of the South has been invaded? . . . Can either of you to-day name one governmental act of wrong, deliberately and purposely done by the government of Washington, of which the South has a right to complain? I challenge the answer." Stephens prophetically warned the South against conduct which might entail the loss of its slaves through a "decree of universal emancipation which," he said, "may reasonably be expected to follow."

At Steubenville, Ohio, he briefly referred to majority rule. "The only dispute on both sides is, 'What are their rights?' If the majority should not rule, who would be the judge? . . . We should all be bound by the majority of the American people; if not, then the minority must control. Would that be right? Would it be just or generous? Assuredly not. I reiterate that the majority should rule. If

I adopt a wrong policy, the opportunity for condemnation will occur in four years' time. Then I can be turned out, and a better man with better views put in my place."

On February 15, at Pittsburgh, the President-elect made a more elaborate speech. After stating that when the time came for him to speak on the distracted condition of the country, he hoped to say nothing contrary to the spirit of the Constitution or disappointing to any whose expectation would be based upon what he had heretofore uttered, he said: "Notwithstanding the troubles across the river [pointing southward across the Monongahela] there is no crisis but an artificial one . . . no crisis, excepting such a one as may be gotten up at any time by turbulent men aided by designing politicians. My advice to them, under such circumstances, is to keep cool. If the great American people only keep their temper on both sides of the line, the troubles will come to an end, and the question which now distracts the country will be settled, just as surely as all other difficulties of a like character which have originated in this government have been adjusted."

Lincoln knew American political and constitutional history well, and so was on familiar ground in his remarks. He felt it necessary at Pittsburgh

to touch upon the tariff, a subject with which he was less intimate, and he so acknowledged. He asked his private secretary to read to the audience the tariff plank of the Chicago platform, which was skillfully worded, and advocated such an adjustment of duties as would encourage good wages and good prices for farm and manufactured products. He then proceeded to generalize upon the economics of value in his strictly original way. The gist of his general doctrine was that labor "is the true standard of value," and it would be advantageous to produce at home necessary articles, "which can be made of as good quality and with as little labor at home as abroad." When goods are imported from abroad that can advantageously be manufactured here, "the carrying is demonstrably a dead loss of labor."

At Cleveland, Lincoln repeated his belief that the "crisis is altogether artificial," and if let alone, would "go down of itself." At Buffalo, he stated that since the difficulties of the country were without precedent, to speak authoritatively he must wait for developments; that the people's adherence to their convictions and to the Constitution would dispel the clouds and bring a "bright and glorious future." To the legislature at Albany, he assured his hearers

that, at the proper time, he would speak for the good of both North and South. Replying to an address of welcome by the mayor of New York City, he declared that nothing would induce his consent to the destruction of the Union "unless it would be that thing for which the Union itself was made." To the Senate of New Jersey, he recalled his early reading of Weems's "Life of Washington," and spoke of his anxiety to be a "humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty" for perpetuating the object of the Revolutionary struggle. Before the Assembly of that State, he disclaimed having any malice toward any section, and said: "The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am, none who would do more to preserve it, but it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly." He hoped to pilot the ship of state through the perils surrounding it, "for if it should suffer wreck now, there will be no pilot ever needed for another voyage." Replying to the mayor of Philadelphia, he again gave it as his opinion that "the panic" was artificial, yet might do "considerable harm." "I promise you," he continued, "that I bring to the work a sincere heart. Whether I will bring a head equal to that heart will be for future times to determine."

The address which Lincoln gave in Independence Hall, on the anniversary of Washington's birth,[1] in nobility of sentiment and elegance of phrase, in its vision and estimate of American constitutional liberty for his country and for mankind, surpassed any other he had yet made. It was improvised. It is a speech one loves to read and linger over, in these days when, throughout the world, the time is at hand when "that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men" is emancipating men and women everywhere from the pretentions of antiquated autocracies, preying like vampires upon the blood and happiness of those whom nature meant to be free and self-governing. The address in Independence Hall was a singularly finished epitome of that philosophy of government the very essence of which he had derived, by years of profound study, from the Declaration of Independence, and of which, thus far in American history, he has been the most sagacious and eminent interpreter. Lincoln was the best prepared man in the country on such a theme —the best educated in the theory and application of the thought that vitalized the system of the Revolutionary founders and gave virility to the precious

1 Page 257, Appendix.

literature which they left to posterity. There was much that was merely commonplace in his other speeches on this journey to the national capital—some things that were trite or ill-favored in diction; but in this off-hand deliverance, in the midst of surroundings freighted with sacred memories, he said the scrupulously fitting thing. There is nothing, perhaps, in word, or succession of sentences, or consistency of sentiment, which the most meticulous stylist would care to alter or omit.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESIDENCY AND THE CIVIL WAR

Our Federal Union; it must be preserved.
—*Andrew Jackson.*

Nothing will ruin the country if the people themselves will undertake its safety; and nothing can save it if they leave that safety in any hands but their own.—*Daniel Webster.*

When the President-elect arrived in Washington, he was welcomed by the mayor and citizens, February 27. In his response, Lincoln intimated his feeling that the ill-temper between the two sections of the country was due to their misunderstanding of each other. He mentioned his purpose to withhold from none the benefits of the Constitution. His very informal address to a party of serenaders on the next day was in similar terms. He was conscious of speaking to southerners, and in homely words expressed the hope that better acquaintance would beget greater confidence between them and him.

In the few days remaining before the inauguration, he consulted with party leaders about the personnel of the cabinet. He was particularly solicitous

to secure the services of Seward and Chase, his late rivals for the Presidency. At the last moment Seward declined to accept the portfolio of State, but reconsidered his action upon the receipt of a well-worded note of ten lines from the incoming Chief Magistrate. This was on the day of the inaugural. Lincoln's address for this occasion had been prepared in a room over a store at Springfield, late in January. Here he locked himself in, according to Herndon, with a few volumes containing "Henry Clay's great speech delivered in 1850; Andrew Jackson's proclamation against Nullification, and a copy of the Constitution. He afterwards called for Webster's reply to Hayne, a speech which he had read when he lived at New Salem, and which he always regarded as the grandest specimen of American oratory." The address[1] contained the new President's assurance of his intention not to disturb the property or peace of the people of the Southern States, of his purpose to offer the protection of the Constitution "as cheerfully to one section as to another." It then considered the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution. On this tender subject the President placed himself on the side of a law to return escaped slaves to their own-

1 Pages 258-269, Appendix.

ers and at the same time to safeguard the negroes already free.

The President considered the theory of the Constitutional Union. He held it to be perpetual—that perpetuity is a fundamental concept of all national government, and hence that no government ever made "in its organic law" provision for its own termination. Only an action "not provided for in the instrument itself" could destroy the Union. Even on the contract theory, although one party might break, the consent of all would be necessary lawfully to "rescind it." He showed that the history of the Union contemplated its perpetuity; that no State of its own motion could get out of it. Therefore, "resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void," and acts by one or more States against the authority of the United States "are insurrectionary or revolutionary." He announced that he would take care that the laws of the nation should be faithfully executed, its property held, its taxes collected, and its mails, "unless repelled," "furnished in all parts of the Union." He warned any who would destroy the Union and fly to greater ills.[1] He presented with clearness the philosophy of ma-

1 Lincoln's words, "the ills you fly from," are probably a reminiscence of Shakespeare's words in *Hamlet*, III, 1:81, 82.

jorities and minorities, and showed that the defection of the minority implied future and unrestricted secession. This would lead to anarchy or despotism.

Respecting a decision of the Supreme Court, it must be binding upon the parties to the suit. Even if it be erroneous, it can better be borne than "the evils of a different practice." On the other hand, the policy of the government on vital questions cannot be "irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court," for in that case the people would have ceased to be their own rulers. The "substantial dispute" between the two sections, he averred, was upon the question whether slavery was right or whether it was wrong. Geographically, separation was out of the question; nor could treaties between aliens be more faithfully enforced than "laws can among friends." It is clear that this argument was far-seeing, and suggested insuperable difficulties to successful separation. The President intimated he would not object to the proposed amendment to the Constitution expressly forbidding the Federal government to "interfere with the domestic institutions of the States," including slaves, inasmuch as that prohibition already was "implied constitutional law." He maintained that the frame of the government was such that, with

a people virtuous and vigilant, public servants could not seriously injure it. He appealed against precipitate action, and pleaded that the intelligence, patriotism, and Christianity of the country were "still competent to adjust in the best way all of our present difficulty."

In point of literary beauty, the closing paragraph of the First Inaugural is truly climactic. It was suggested to Lincoln by Seward, who wrote it originally as follows:

I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens or enemies, but fellow-countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. The mystic chords which, proceeding from so many battlefields and so many patriot graves, pass through all the hearts and all hearths in this broad continent of ours, will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation.

It would have been better for Lincoln to close his first state paper, as he intended, without adding Seward's climax. But it was better still to take the latter's suggestion, which was offered as such, and transform it into a graceful appeal to sentiment—the moving memory of the past, the historic achieve-

ment of both North and South under the common emotion of a friendly spirit and singleness of aim. Retouched by Lincoln's defter hand, Seward's thought reappeared in more felicitous and enduring phrase:

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

In the field of politics, Lincoln had become a master. He had kept on good terms with the crowd. He had a large sympathy for the masses. He had great faith in public opinion. He had been untiring in his search for the best knowledge available, and had retained and organized his information with a view to its accuracy and practical usefulness. In the art of reasoning, he had acquired power; in the use of language, he had improved his natural taste by continual practice in writing and speaking. His resourcefulness reached from crudity in illustration to ideals that capture by their ethical refinement and charm. His success had come without the com-

promise of personal integrity and conviction. His manner of action and speech, as well as his personal appearance, often provoked disappointment or a gibe. But there was a personality within him which transcended the appeal of physical comeliness or the claims of convention, and gave power to his ideas. These were contagious by virtue of their moral quality and unusual insight. He was a philosopher, too, in his devotion to common-sense.

The new task before him was not politics, but statesmanship. He had come through many gradations of valuable experience, but he was untrained to the devious detail of actual administration. The responsibility of the Presidency entails far more than its executive function. Of this Lincoln was aware, but he had no advantage of long residence at Washington or observation abroad. He had not been governor of a State. He had seen the workings of a western legislature and that of the lower house of Congress. But the contacts involved in the Presidency were new, and implied great adjustment. There was a ceaseless swarm of office-seekers to deal with. Foreign relations and diplomatic functionaries called for close acquaintance and punctilious handling. Above all, the terrible emergency of a civil war pressed upon his mind an infinite

variety of unfamiliar demands: the delicate treatment of the southern forts, the calling and equipment of raw troops, the supplying of military officers, transportation by land and sea of munitions, food and funds, the blockade of the southern ports, recommendations to Congress, the execution of a just and consistent policy for the welfare of the nation, present and future.

The matter of general policy he had long pondered. He had carefully worked it out on paper in the solitary room at Springfield. He expected the world to take note of that in his First Inaugural. When the Virginia convention, hesitating at Richmond before the irrevocable step of secession, sent a committee in April to ask the President to relieve the "uncertainty which prevails in the public mind as to the policy which the Federal executive intends to pursue toward the seceded States," the President expressed "deep regret and some mortification" that there still survived "great and injurious uncertainty in the public mind as to what policy" he intended to pursue. He repeated to the commissioners a part of the Inaugural, with comments, and commended that document to their "careful consideration" as the "best expression I can give of my purposes."

It is to Lincoln's lasting renown that he was able

through deep study and powerful imagination to set out in clear and substantial terms, at the beginning of his actual responsibilities, the purposes and principles of conduct which were to guide him through the unseen exigencies of a great and prolonged war. This is, essentially, the thing that gives to the First Inaugural the importance of literature. There is, too, the excision of needless details. It is comprehensive and directly pertinent to the great social and historic question affecting the life and fortune of the American people then and thereafter. Its language and its thought have satisfied the judgment of later generations.

Throughout the tedious routine of the war period, Lincoln's writings are filled with orders, proclamations, and dispatches called out by the business of administration. His great mind and heart were not completely swamped by the insistent demands of official duty. Here and there the heavy weight of executive obligation is lightened by accents of beautiful sympathy and thoughtfulness for others. An instance of this, too little known, is his letter of May 25, 1861, to the parents of young Colonel Ellsworth, who, as commander of a regiment of zouaves, had been sent to Alexandria, Virginia, to take possession of Arlington Heights, for the protection of

Washington. The young commander hauled down, with his own hands, a Confederate flag floating above the Marshall Hotel. For this he was shot and killed by the owner of the place. He had studied law in Lincoln's office in Springfield, and his death was regarded by the President as a personal loss. Lincoln's letter of condolence contains a portrait of the gallant young officer as engaging as the final words to his parents are tender and appropriate.[1]

In a similar spirit he wrote to tender the thanks of the nation to the Army of the Potomac after the battle of Fredericksburg. On the next day, December 23, 1862, he penned to Miss Fanny McCullough a note on her father's death, quite removed from the class of formal expressions of sympathy.[2] This letter contains a hopeful outlook for grief: the President, with the mild philosophy of a father's faith in the mellowing fruits of sorrow, spoke of the legacy of a chastened memory, "a sad, sweet feeling in your heart of a purer and holier sort than you have known before." In the face of conditions depending upon inventiveness and efficiency for their successful outcome, the tragedies of civil war are lightened for us to-day who read what the great man wrote in solitude and in shadow, when

1 Page 303, Appendix. 2 Page 308, Appendix.

none could know better than he the limitations incident to the instruments of efficiency:

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect his purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power on the minds of the now contestants, he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.

This sounds like the reflection of a man who loved to think deeply upon the phenomena of the world's affairs. In the light of his religious faith he sought to brace his judgment at moments when it was difficult to keep his bearings clear. In his order of November 15, 1862, he turned his deeper sentiments to practical account by enjoining "the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the officers

and men in the military and naval service." From the point of view of content and expression, this order is a literary model for its purpose. It indicates a felicitous union of the virtues of morality and discipline, with that historic sense of liberty which was the soul of the great cause that men were fighting and dying for.

There is a biblical touch in much that Lincoln wrote. But in this he was as practical in spirit as when he drew an illustration from Euclid or from a historical document. The Proclamation for a National Fast Day, of August 12, 1861, pursuant to a resolution of Congress requesting the President to "recommend a day of public prayer, humiliation, and fasting," follows, in its midde paragraphs, the literary rhythm, and sometimes the phrase, of the English Prayer Book.

And whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the supreme government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions, in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray with all fervency and contrition for the pardon of their offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action . . . I do earnestly recommend to

all the people, and especially to ministers and teachers of religion, of all denominations, and to all heads of families, to observe and keep that day, according to their several creeds and modes of worship in all humility and with all religious solemnity, to the end that the united prayer of the nation may ascend to the Throne of Grace, and bring down plentiful blessings upon our country.

Four months after his inauguration, the President sent to Congress his first message, on the eighty-fifth anniversary of American independence. This was written in language clear and elevated, and it contains several splendid paragraphs in which he carried the conflict above the manner of administrative discussion into the domain of political philosophy. Even here his style has the freedom and simplicity of the essayist interpreting the significance of a familiar though epical theme.

And this issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic or democracy—a government of the people by the same people—can or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in numbers to control administration according to organic law in

any case, can always, upon the pretenses made in this case, or on any other pretenses, or arbitrarily without any pretense, break up their government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth. It forces us to ask: "Is there, in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness?" "Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?" . . .

This is essentially a people's contest. On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of goverment whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life. Yielding to partial and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend. . . .

Our popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it our people have already settled—the successful establishing and the successful administering of it. One still remains—its successful maintenance against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world that those who can fairly carry an election can also suppress a rebellion; that ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors of bullets; and that when bal-

lots have fairly and constitutionally decided, there can be no successful appeal back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal, except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections. Such will be a great lesson of peace: teaching men that what they cannot take by an election, neither can they take it by a war; teaching all the folly of being the beginners of war.

There was no more profound student of the war than Lincoln. If there was sacrifice of self in thought, he made it beyond any contemporary. If disunion involved issues vital to the welfare of men everywhere in the modern world, no one else was so soundly convinced of the fact as he. His mind had become lucid from long contemplation on that historic sequence of events and motives which had ended in the rash resolve to break up the Union. The implications of the struggle were clearer to him than to any other living man. His conception as well as his penetration suggests the close parallel of Washington's studious solicitude for the destiny of the republic he had done so much to create. In a letter to Jefferson, his somewhat discordant secretary of state, Washington deplored "internal dissentions" and felt convinced that "if, instead of laying our shoulders to the machine after measures are decided on, one pulls this way and another that, before the

utility of the thing is fairly tried, it [the government] must inevitably be torn asunder; and in my opinion the fairest prospect of happiness and prosperity that ever was presented to man will be lost perhaps *for ever.*"

It would be impossible for subsequent scholarship to conceive with exactness the *personal meaning* which Washington and Lincoln—those two great trustees of modern democracy—attached to the patiently- and arduously-reared "edifice of American constitutional liberty." For both men the processes of interpretation would be implied in the words which the great Roman poet put into the mouth of his epic hero: "a part of which I was." It is possible only to approximate the mind of these master-workmen through their words, for they held a quality of fidelity and charity toward the republic such as a world artist feels for the offspring of his imagination, or such as a parent feels for his family and the estate which his long toil has created for their future happiness and prosperity.

Lincoln's letter to Horace Greeley, August 22, 1862, illustrates to some degree this view of the matter. So also does his reply to the Committee of United Religious Denominations from Chicago, written in the September following. The sixteen

sentences of the Greeley letter follow each other as a series of closely connected propositions. Mr. Greeley's unfriendly attitude toward the administration is placed under the burden of self-defence with quiet but firm dignity. Then follow a dozen sentences stating consecutively, and from every important angle of public opinion, the possible aspects of the President's "paramount object," namely, "to save the Union." Once for all, the great editor and those who read the *New York Tribune* might know that, in Lincoln's judgment, the destiny of slavery was subordinate to the preservation of the Union of the States under the Constitution.[1] Nor did the writer of the letter leave his attitude toward slavery in any uncertainty. "I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free." Undoubtedly, Mr. Greeley and many other sincere folk felt that the President had lost or had compromised his earlier views on the dominant issue of the party which had placed him at the head of the nation. Mr. Greeley's myopia lay in the fact that he had not yet come to regard the integrity of the Union, so suddenly and recently challenged, as a matter of as great import as slavery

1 The letters to Greeley and A. G. Hodges supplement the letter to Conkling. See Appendix, pages 304, 313 and 318, for all three.

itself. A President of less literary taste and skill might easily have considered Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions of People" worth fifty or more sentences, and would probably have assumed an attitude of defence throughout, with more prolixity than vision.

The President's reply to the Committee from Chicago represents his capacity for intellectual discernment, outreaching that of men accustomed to look at but one side of the question, important though that side could be admitted to be. He conceded the point that emancipation would "help us in Europe," and admitted that "slavery is at the root of the war." But he reminded his visitors that the fact that constitutional government was at stake furnished an ample principle around which to rally and unite the people. Lincoln must have often felt sick at heart at the naïveté of well-meaning and intelligent people who would have him sink the ship they were in as a means of freeing it from a noxious custom employed by a certain proportion of the passengers. He was planning to save the ship, and was hoping he might manage the noxious custom in order to achieve that great result. He had long wrestled with the propriety of emancipating the slaves as a military measure—was on the point, in fact, of

doing this. He took the negative side of the question before the committee, as a judicially-minded statesman anxious to discover all that was implicit in that side before committing himself irrevocably to the other. Within a few days—September 22—he gave out the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, the prelude to the final proclamation of January 1, 1863. This great state paper, historic and enlightened in its object and results, possesses the form and substance of an executive order, and has no other literary distinction.

During this period the President wrote numerous letters. One of several that possess the flavor of literature was written to the king of Siam, to acknowledge the receipt of certain rich gifts from his majesty. It is a jewel six paragraphs long. The wording is flawless. Its style has the springy atmosphere of a May morning. Throughout it is characterized by delicately veiled good-humor and well-bred diplomacy. It is the matured effect foreshadowed in the letters to Colonel Robert Allen and Mrs. O. H. Browning twenty-five years earlier.

Great and good Friend: I have received your Majesty's two letters of the date of February 14, 1861. I have received in good condition the royal gift which accompanied those letters, namely, a sword of costly

materials and exquisite workmanship, a photographic likeness of your Majesty and of your Majesty's beloved daughter, and also two elephant's tusks of length and magnitude, such as indicate that they could have belonged only to an animal which was a native of Siam.

Your Majesty's letters show an understanding that our laws forbid the President from receiving these rich presents as personal treasures. They are therefore accepted in accordance with your Majesty's desire as tokens of your good will and friendship for the American people. Congress being now in session at this capital, I have had great pleasure in making known to them this manifestation of your Majesty's munificence and kind consideration.

Under their direction the gifts will be placed among the archives of the government where they will remain perpetually as tokens of mutual esteem and pacific disposition more honorable to both nations than any trophies of conquest could be.

I appreciate most highly your Majesty's tender of good offices in forwarding to this Government a stock from which a supply of elephants might be raised on our soil. This Government would not hesitate to avail itself of so generous an offer if the object were one which could be made practically useful in the present condition of the United States. Our political jurisdiction, however, does not reach a latitude so low as to favor the multiplication of the elephant, and steam

on land as well as on water has been our best and most efficient agent of transportation in internal commerce.

I shall have occasion at no distant day to transmit to your Majesty some token of indication of the high sense which this Government entertains of your Majesty's friendship.

Meantime, wishing for your Majesty a long and happy life, and, for the generous and emulous people of Siam, the highest possible prosperity, I commend both to the blessing of Almighty God.

Your good friend,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Another of these letters was to General Hooker.[1] Lincoln was in search of a general for the Army of the Potomac. McClellan had not shown sufficient vigor of offensive. Burnside had met his disaster at Fredericksburg. Lincoln chose Hooker in the face of the desire of Stanton and Halleck for Rosencrans. Nicolay and Hay think that the most remarkable feature of this letter "is the evidence it gives how completely the genius of President Lincoln had by this time—the middle of his presidential term—risen to the full height of his great national duties and responsibilities." In composition, the letter is remarkable for its conformity to a single idea.

1 Page 311, Appendix.

That idea was to get a military service out of Hooker which the President had been sleeplessly anxious for, against Lee. After Hooker's ill-success at Chancellorsville, and Meade, his successor, had failed to follow up his advantage at Gettysburg, Lincoln longed for "a master mind" for the army. The letter moves from commendation to courteous rebuke and admonition, in a single paragraph. It reveals the Commander-in-Chief's self-controlled eagerness to stimulate what he had by this time conceived to be the proper military temper of an army leader. He felt there was something catching in Hooker's self-confidence and energy. Possibly he could restrain the general's faults, and make a successful head of an army out of him. So he wrote this letter, in all respects finely conceived and perfectly set out in words. It is instinct with wisdom, and Hooker's comment upon reading it is reported to us by Noah Brooks: "He finished reading it almost with tears in his eyes, and as he folded it and put it back in the breast of his coat, he said: 'That is such a letter as a father might write to his son. It is a beautiful letter, and although he was harder on me than I deserved, I will say that I love the man who wrote it!'"

In the following April, when Lincoln made a quiet

visit to Hooker's headquarters at Falmouth, Virginia, the general asserted: "I am going straight to Richmond, if I live." This remark filled Lincoln with misgivings, from its over-confident tone. To Mr. Brooks he remarked: "It's about the worst thing I have seen since I have been down here." A month later when the news reached the President that Hooker had met Lee and had retreated from the south side of the Rappahannock, with hands clasped behind his back, "Lincoln walked up and down the room, saying, 'My God, my God, what will the country say! What will the country say!'"

The man of large political knowledge, able as a constitutional lawyer, kindly in spirit and philosophical in cast of mind, a master in artistry of expression, unsurpassed in his ability to read and handle men, felt, as none other in the land could feel, the pangs of torment from the defeat of his armies. There had been suddenly thrust upon him, at close range, the novel and by no means congenial task of studying the art of war. This necessity he had not shirked. That he had approached this obligation with his old-time mental grasp is evident from the letter he wrote to McClellan in February, 1862, containing a critical comparison between his own and that general's plan of campaign in Virginia.

Lincoln kept in the closest possible contact with his commanders and with the army of the East. He studied the geographical nature of the theater of war. He followed the movements of the troops, and agonized over the delays of his generals to push forward, and the prolongation of the strife. The military academy had long been typical of the South. The upper class of that section had long been accustomed to military drill, and the use of arms had been the habitual disposition of both classes. The South had its "master mind" at the outset of hostilities. The North, with its absence of class cleavage in the southern sense, with its growing cities and abounding industry, was predisposed to occupations disassociated with war or the dextrous use of arms. The North had to develop the spirit of war after the conflict began, and had to train and discover its "master mind." This process involved the campaigns against Donelson and Vicksburg. The process was completed at Chattanooga, the most picturesque and brilliant victory of the Civil War. In Grant, Lincoln at last found, in the domain of war, his long-expected "master mind." [1]

Meanwhile the North was wearying of what at the moment seemed a fruitless slaughter of men in

1 Rhodes, "History of the Civil War" (1917), pp. 203, 303.

the field. The sporadic disloyal elements actively sowed the seeds of discontent. There was criticism of the President's policy. None knew better than he that the failure of the Union generals to gain military successes lay at the heart of this criticism, and no one sympathized more than he with the feeling of the public mind. Both this feeling and the President's attitude toward it are almost perfectly indicated by the following poem, written at the time by E. C. Stedman, which Lincoln read to his Cabinet.

Back from the trebly crimsoned field
  Terrible words are thunder-tost,
Full of the wrath that will not yield,
  Full of revenge for battles lost!
  Hark to their echo, as it crost
The Capital, making faces wan:
  End this murderous holocaust;
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *man!*

Give us a man of God's own mould,
  Born to marshal his fellow-men;
One whose fame is not bought and sold
  At the stroke of a politician's pen;
  Give us the man of thousands ten,
Fit to do as well as to plan;
  Give us a rallying-cry, and then,
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *man!*

No leader to shirk the boasting foe,
  And to march and countermarch our brave
Till they fall like ghosts in the marshes low,
  And swamp-grass covers each nameless grave;
  Nor another, whose fatal banners wave
Aye in Disaster's shameful van;
  Nor another, to bluster, and lie, and rave—
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *man!*

Hearts are mourning in the North,
  While the sister rivers seek the main,
Red with our life-blood flowing forth—
  Who shall gather it up again?
  Though we march to the battle-plain
Firmly as when the strife began,
  Shall all our offerings be in vain?
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *man!*

Is there never one in all the land,
  One on whose might the Cause may lean?
Are all the common ones so grand,
  And all the titled ones so mean?
  What if your failure may have been
In trying to make good bread from bran,
  From worthless metal a weapon keen?—
Abraham Lincoln, find us a *man!*

O, we will follow him to the death,
Where the foeman's fiercest columns are!
O, we will use our latest breath,
Cheering for every sacred star!
His to marshal us high and far;
Ours to battle, as patriots can
When a Hero leads the Holy War!—
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *man!*

An opportunity soon came to Lincoln to address himself to this discontent and to indicate the logic of his own policy. He was invited by his old friends to be present at a mass meeting of "Unconditional Union men" to be held in Springfield, early in September. His duties did not admit of his attendance, and, instead, he sent a letter to his old-time friend, James C. Conkling, to be read to the people. To Mr. Conkling he sent also the following personal note:

My dear Conkling:

I cannot leave here now. Herewith is a letter instead. You are one of the best public readers. I have but one suggestion—read it very slowly. And now God bless you and all good Union men.

Yours as ever,

A. Lincoln.

This letter,[1] which Lincoln referred to as his "stump speech" and which was reproduced as a good specimen of Nineteenth Century prose by an English scholar, John Earle, then professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University, in his well-known work on "English Prose," is one of the most complete examples he has left us of his talent for grasping a complex national situation and reducing it to plain terms, by skill and simplicity of analysis. It was influential in checking the popular discontent and in smoothing the somewhat dubious path to his renomination the next year. It helped to clear up the minds of many who were perplexed by the Emancipation Proclamation—of some, too, who were unfriendly to that act. The letter possesses remarkable unity and movement, and an evident note of deep sincerity. It should be read as a whole—even as its great author suggested, "very slowly." Its significance lies in part in the feeling it expresses that Lincoln had now reached the point of strong confidence in the wisdom of his course thus far. The burden of novelty and doubt was lifting; there was a note of spiritual yet restrained elation in what had already been achieved—an intuition of happier fortune just ahead.

1 Page 313, Appendix.

Although the letter to Conkling is argumentative in purport, it must always remain a notable and historic composition—the best resumé we now have of the motive and results of the administration during the first half of the civil struggle. As a piece of literary prose, it creates, by sure and agile strokes, an ensemble of all the effective phases of public thought; it rises to a summit of hope and prophecy for the republic—rhythmic—arresting—a foreshadowing of the sweet and solemn music he was so soon to create.

CHAPTER IX

FROM GETTYSBURG TO THE SECOND INAUGURAL

It is equally true of the pen as of the pencil, that what is drawn from life and from the heart alone bears the impress of immortality.—*Tuckerman.*

I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war.—*Milton.*

Less than three months after the letter to Conkling, Lincoln wrote and delivered the Gettysburg Address. There are those who regard this as the most important literary performance growing out of the Civil War—that of all that was written during that period, it will longest endure. Certain it is that this Address is our most perfect hymn in prose. It has the quiet yet stately roll of cathedral harmony. In thought and emotion it is deeply impressive and spiritual. Miltonic in conception and rhythm, it is a rich and satisfying intellectual possession to those who have stored up its sacred lines in memory. In Lowell's phrase,

They mingle with our life's ethereal part,
Sweetening and gathering sweetness evermore,
By beauty's franchise disenthralled of time.

Many events united to inspire this great utterance. Primary among these were the military. After Hooker's loss of the battle of Chancellorsville, Lincoln was again in search of a general. Hooker remained in command of the eastern army until Lee, planning to transfer the devastation of war to the North and seize the vast industrial resources of Pennsylvania, moved steadily northward through Maryland. Hooker wished to make a countermarch against Richmond. Dissuaded by the President, who preferred the destruction of Lee's army, he vigilantly paralleled Lee's direction, merely to cover the important cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. Suddenly he resigned, and Meade, a "lean, tall, studious" subordinate officer, whom Lincoln trusted, was appointed in his place. Meade, whose first impression of the sealed communication bearing his appointment was of an official order "to relieve or arrest" him, wrote to his wife that "it appears to be God's will for some good purpose—at any rate I had nothing to do but to accept and exert my utmost abilities to command success. . . . I am moving at once against Lee. . . . A battle will decide the fate of our country and our cause." The two armies struggled for the victory through three days of carnage, July 1-3, 1863. Both

sides lost approximately one-fourth of their numbers, and Lee, feeling the impracticability of his northern venture, retreated to the south side of the Potomac. Simultaneously with Meade's success, Vicksburg fell to Grant. These successes for the North were pivotal. The Union would probably triumph and slavery would be abolished. A vision of the past and future America rose like a new hope in the soul of the war-worn President. Among certain governors of States a movement was set on foot to establish a national cemetery at Gettysburg. The dedicatory exercises were set for November 19, and the venerable Edward Everett, born during Washington's presidency, and wearing many honors, as an ex-president of Harvard, as United States Senator, as Minister to England, as Secretary of State, and who had been a candidate for President against Lincoln, was asked to make the principal address of the occasion. The President was invited to attend, and later it was suggested that he make such "dedicatory remarks" as he deemed appropriate. His Address, partly written at Washington, was finished in the house of his host at Gettysburg.[1]

1 The most authoritative account of the composition of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is by his secretary, John G. Nicolay, in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. 47:596 ff. Interesting

Everett's "classical" address received well-deserved praise. It was listened to for two hours by an audience in the neighborhood of one hundred thousand people.[1] It is an elaborate and intellectual production. Its patriotic sentiment is lofty and admirable, and its fluent eulogy must have been pleasing to the expectant multitude. But as a composition it suffers from its academic garb and overwrought conceptions. Nor is it supported by emotion or great insight. Its brilliancy is less interpretive than verbal. Its weakness in this particular was probably apparent to Everett himself as he listened to Lincoln's address, which followed. It is reported that, when Lincoln congratulated him on his success, he replied: "Ah, Mr. President, how gladly would I exchange all my hundred pages to have been the author of your twenty lines."

There is much unconscious poetry in the more

accounts of those who heard the Address are to be found in W. H. Lambert's "The Gettysburg Address;" "Recollections of Lincoln," by General James Grant Wilson; *Putnam's Magazine* for February, 1909; and "Lincoln at Gettysburg," by Clark E. Carr. A brief and interesting account by an eye-witness is by Junius B. Remensnyder, *The Outlook*, February 13, 1918, p. 243. An excellent summary of useful and interesting information has been compiled by Mr. Isaac Markens, of New York City, in his "Lincoln's Masterpiece," privately printed. For additional comment on the Address, see Appendix, page 278.

1 See *Memoirs* of Cornelius Cole (1908), ex-United States Senator from California, pp. 165-166, for an interesting eye-witness account of the two dedication addresses.

deeply-felt utterances of Abraham Lincoln. No other writer of American prose has quite matched him in this respect. His masterpieces have often the cadence of epic lines, and easily fall into the movement of musical measures. Any one with an elementary knowledge of metrics may test for himself this quality of certain passages in Lincoln's writings. It will be found that his best prose has as much of the modulation of rhythm as the best of Ruskin's, without the over-fluent character of the latter. No one has expressed this quality of Lincoln's prose with more appreciation than the late Richard Watson Gilder in his eloquent little volume on "Lincoln the Leader." Speaking of Lincoln's "traits of pathos and imagination," he remarks that "Lincoln's prose, at its height and when his spirit was stirred by aspiration and resolve, affects the soul like noble music. Indeed, there may be found in all his great utterances a strain which is like the leading motive—the *Leit-motif*—in a musical drama; a strain of mingled pathos, heroism, and resolution. That is the strain in the two inaugurals, in the 'Gettysburg Address,' and in his letter of consolation to a bereaved mother, which moves the hearts of generation after generation."

An interesting essay on "The Poetry of Lincoln"

was contributed to the *North American Review* some years since by James Raymond Perry. The author arranged certain of Lincoln's addresses into lines to illustrate their rhythmical character. The Gettysburg Address was shown to fall into the following metrical form:

Fourscore and seven years ago
Our fathers brought forth upon this continent
A new nation conceived in liberty,
And dedicated to the proposition
That all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
Testing whether that nation, or any nation
So conceived and so dedicated
Can long endure. We are met
On a great battle-field of that war.
We have come to dedicate a portion of
That field as a final resting-place
For those who here gave their lives
That that nation might live.
It is altogether fitting and proper
That we should do this.

But in a larger sense
We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate,
We cannot hallow this ground. The barve men
Living and dead, who struggled here,
Have consecrated it far above our power

To add or detract. The world will little note
Nor long remember what we say here,
But it can never forget what they did here.
It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here
To the unfinished work which they who fought here
Have thus far so nobly advanced.
It is rather for us to be here dedicated
To the great task remaining before us;
That from these honored dead we take
Increased devotion to that cause for which
They gave the last full measure of devotion;
That we here highly resolve that these dead
Shall not have died in vain, that this nation,
Under God, shall have a new birth of freedom;
And that government of the people,
By the people, and for the people,
Shall not perish from the earth.

However successfully, by the laws of metrical measures, we may artificially dispose the more notable of Lincoln's prose productions as evidence of their poetic quality, the final argument for their musical character is revealed in their thought-content. They fit De Quincey's description of the "literature of power." They move, but not so much by their beautiful words, like Poe's poems, as by the thought which commands the words. Lincoln is to be interpreted first of all as a man who brought powerful thought to bear upon the theme in which

he was deeply interested. He wrote slowly, because he found that words were but feeble media for the expression of great consciousness and its atmosphere of feeling. Therefore he seems partial to simple, idiomatic language when it will more swiftly meet and carry his thought. It has been customary to mention the large proportion of Anglo-Saxon derived words in the Gettysburg Address. On the other hand, one is struck by the prevalence of Latin-derived words in the delightfully written acknowledgment to the king of Siam, reprinted in the previous chapter. As a matter of fact, Lincoln, when he was in the writing mood, brooded over his words, tried his verbal resources to their utmost, and then chose the best he had in hand. His letter to Colonel Allen, in his young manhood, more than twenty-five years before the Gettysburg Address, shows a decided leaning toward words of foreign derivation, while his letters to his step-brother, Johnson, fifteen years later than the Allen letter, prefer words of English ancestry. Lincoln had little interest in the philology of language. His main concern was with the meaning and extent of his vocabulary, and his leading principle of composition seems to have been to use the expression, from whatever origin, that would satisfy the reader's or listener's understand-

ing. His devotion to this principle, or method, sometimes led him into the use of words or phrases of less dignity than the context would call for.[1]

There may be some question whether the actual words of the Gettysburg Address are chosen in every instance with as excellent discrimination as the thought indicated was conceived. It is, however, the special consciousness they embody that is the soul of the poetry they suggest. Lincoln's unique personality, the moral character of the great problem round which his political experience turned, his whole-souled sympathy for the welfare of the mass of mankind, together with his righteous hatred of special privilege and oppression of any kind, gave him the

1 There are many instances of this, but a single one with his own comment will suffice. In his message to Congress, July 4, 1861, speaking of the "ingenious sophism" by which southern leaders had drugged the public mind of their section, he referred to the rebellion as "thus sugar-coated." Defrees, the Public Printer, ventured to remind the President that the phrase was unbecoming a state-paper. Lincoln replied: "Well, Defrees, if you think the time will ever come when the people will not understand what 'sugar-coated' means, I'll alter it; otherwise, I think I'll let it go." His response to a delegation from the National Union League, which called to notify him of his renomination, combines language that is unexceptional with the purely homespun. See Appendix, pp. 279-280.

Occasionally Lincoln's homebred phrases were aphoristic and have become permanently popular. An instance of this is taken from a report of a speech he made at Clinton, Ill., September 8, 1858, between the second and third debates with Douglas. At that time he is reported to have used the famous dictum: "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

power, after the victories over Lee and Pemberton, to pen this ripened conception of democracy in America. In the Gettysburg speech, he seems to have taken the body of his conviction, derived from many elements of observation and study, and fashioned it, like a master artist, into a single life-like conception. His thought is sculptured more nearly after the lines of the classical than the Gothic. Like Angelo, he arrived at beauty by striking out the superfluous.

Lincoln's imagination was interfused with a vital strain of social sympathy—sympathy for his fellows. For them he aspired. He loved to contemplate the self-improvement of the less fortunate—of which his own case was so wonderful an exemplification. His age and environment accounted for this peculiarity of sympathy as well as the strong political turn of his native fancy. Thus, his mind spent its force in interpretative rather than in creative activity; he became the outstanding spokesman of the public opinion of his time and country—the opinion which he himself did so much to shape and define.

Out of his sympathetic experience grew the spontaneous words of his farewell speech at Springfield. It shaped his finely-tempered First Inaugural. Its spirit is seen in the historic emancipation paper, in

his thanksgiving and fast-day proclamations, in his treatment of his critics, and in his devout religious inclinations. It even influenced his formal communications to the Congress, in which he discussed the affairs of state in the light of a clear purpose and a more benignant day. In his annual message following his visit to Gettysburg, he said:

In the midst of other cares, however important, we must not lose sight of the fact that the war power is still our main reliance. To that power alone can we look, yet for a time, to give confidence to the people in the contested regions that the insurgent power will not again overrun them. Until that confidence shall be established, little can be done anywhere for what is called reconstruction. Hence our chiefest care must still be directed to the army and navy, who have thus far borne their harder part so nobly and well. And it may be esteemed fortunate that in giving the greatest efficiency to these indispensable arms, we do also honorably recognize the gallant men, from commander to sentinel, who compose them, and to whom, more than to others, the world must stand indebted for the home of freedom disenthralled, regenerated, enlarged, and perpetuated.

It is doubtful whether any other writer of English has interpreted with such humanity and noble mean-

ing the democratic function of an army. To Lincoln, the war meant the perpetuation of self-government in America and its vindication to the rest of the world. It is interesting to contemplate the extent to which the rest of the world, fermenting under the dead weight of an effete regime, has felt the necessity of turning to this "home of freedom" for assistance, as well as example, in perpetuating its own best life, "disenthralled, regenerated, and enlarged," during the half century since that message to Congress was written.

Combining with singular felicity Lincoln's passion for political democracy and his interest in men, is his address of August 22, 1864, to the citizen soldiery constituting the 166th Ohio Volunteers:

SOLDIERS: I suppose you are going home to see your families and friends. For the services you have done in this great struggle in which we are all engaged, I present you sincere thanks for myself and the country.

I almost always feel inclined, when I happen to say anything to soldiers, to impress upon them, in a few brief remarks, the importance of success in this contest. It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come, that we should perpetuate for our children's children that great and free government which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember

this, not merely for my sake, but for yours. I happen, temporarily, to occupy the White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each one of you may have, through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright—not only for one, but for two or three years. The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.

The heart of this beautiful address constitutes a simple song of liberty and equality. Mr. Perry has arranged its rhythmical lines, leaving out the prose introduction, as follows:

It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come,
That we should perpetuate for our children's children
That great and free government which we have enjoyed
All our lives. I beg you to consider this,
Not merely for my sake, but for yours.
I happen, temporarily, to occupy the White House.
I am a living witness that any of your children
May look to come here as my father's child has.
It is in order that each one of you may have,
Through this free government which we have enjoyed,

An open field and a fair chance for your industry,
Enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have
Equal privileges in the race of life,
With all its desirable human aspirations.
It is for this the struggle should be maintained,
That we may not lose our birthright—
Not only for one, but for two or three years.
The nation is worth fighting for
To secure such an inestimable jewel.

Of course it is not maintained that this is poetry. It lacks the incommunicable witness of that form of literature. But it has, like the Gettysburg Address and the two inaugurals, a high and serious theme and the elements of pure rhythm and melody. Many of Lincoln's lines are the proper stuff for recitative, and if an oratorio might be written on a political subject of epic moment and impressiveness, ample materials could be found in the literature he has left us.

The reason of deepest significance—the reason which is divinely spiritual—why Lincoln's greater writings carry the virtue of immortality, is discernible in the impression they create of his singular unselfishness. This high quality of character remained steadfast through joy and gloom. A remarkable bit of testimony on this point is contained in a

memorandum the President wrote in August, 1864, when he felt that he had so far lost the confidence of the people that he could not be chosen again to the Executive office:

This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be reëlected. Then it will be my duty to so coöperate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterward. A. Lincoln.

After his second triumph at the polls, he had Mr. Hay open the sealed envelop containing the memorandum, and read it to the Cabinet, after he had reminded the members that it was the paper on the back of which he had asked them to sign their names without knowledge of the contents.

In an address to a party of serenaders on the day of the election, when it appeared that the result of the contest would be in his favor, he closed with this characteristic sentiment:

I am thankful to God for this approval of the people; but, while deeply grateful for this mark of their confidence in me, if I know my heart, my gratitude is free from any taint of personal triumph. I do not impugn the motives of any one opposed to me. It is no pleas-

ure to me to triumph over any one, but I give thanks to the Almighty for this evidence of the people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity.

The terrible destruction of the war between the two sections of his beloved country had perfected the quality and spirit of his own service. He felt that no sacrifice was too great in behalf of a reunited nation. The Union was dearer to him than life; and as dear to him as his own life were the lives of the devoted soldiers who had made an equal sacrifice—in his feeling, a greater sacrifice than all others.

The effect of the long tragedy did not, as might have been looked for, reduce the beauty and potency of his style and imagination. It tended to establish and perfect it. In November, he wrote the beautiful letter to Mrs. Bixby, to which Richard Watson Gilder alluded as moving with consolation "the hearts of generation after generation." Like the Gettysburg Address, this perfect gem of prose literature must become a cherished personal possession to give one its full effect of lyric charm and excellence. The prose form of this composition may be read in the Appendix to this volume,[1] but to un-

1 Page 321, Appendix.

derstand its peculiar lyric unity and movement, it is helpful to see it in the rhythmic arrangement which Mr. Perry has given it:

DEAR MADAM:
I have been shown in the files of the War Department
A statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts
That you are the mother of five sons
Who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel
How weak and fruitless must be any words of mine
Which should attempt to beguile you from the grief
Of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain
From tendering to you the consolation that may be
found
In the thanks of the Republic they died to save.
I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage
The anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only
The cherished memory of the loved and lost,
And the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid
So costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

CHAPTER X

THE CLOSING TRIUMPH OF A GREAT CAREER

It is so with all essential literature. It has the quality to move you, and you can never mistake it, if you have any blood in you. And it has also the power to instruct you which is as effective as it is subtle, and which no research or systematic method can ever rival.—*Woodrow Wilson.*

Lincoln's reëlection brought him face to face with a second phase of the problem imposed by secession. History was full of instances of the military subordination of insurgent populations for the purpose of preserving national integrity and sovereignty. But the restoration of organic political units, each bearing a republican form of self-government, which had contended by long warfare for the right to maintain a political grouping different from that of their original connection, presented a situation that was novel, if not untried. With no Constitutional provision for such a contingency, the case clearly called for original treatment. In the midst of a multitude of other and more pressing duties, the President had looked forward to the responsibility of reconstruction. The legal aspects of the

case were delicate and could easily provoke dispute. The question presented itself: Had the constitutional connection between the loyal and disloyal States actually been broken by defection and the paralysis of civil war, or was secession to be treated as an incident of unsuccessful revolt within an "indestructible Union of indestructible States"? The latter seems to have been Lincoln's view of the matter. It implied a voluntary resumption of the former civil relations on the initiative of the erring States, under new constitutions fitting the changes produced by the war. The readjustment might be made, it seemed to him, free from the needless burdens and confusion which could easily beset the condition of conquered States, and in a spirit of simplicity which would inspire feelings of good temper and good faith for the future.

In such a frame of mind he cautiously laid the foundation of a policy of reconstruction. The assassin's bullet closed the door forever upon the success of that policy. Fortunately for posterity, that tragedy was deferred until after it inherited Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address.

As the months following the election brought him nearer the fourth of March, 1865, and brought with their lapse the growing certainty of Lee's defeat,

Lincoln's physical declension was observed by those nearest him. The burden of the past four years told heavily upon his bodily strength and wrought a marked change in his appearance. The rugged face had become strangely spiritual. His eye, always kindly in its effect, now revealed the saintly aspect of soul chastened by long toil and suffering. "His whole appearance, poise, and bearing had marvelously changed," says the Hon. James Harlan. "He was in fact transfigured. That indescribable sadness which had previously seemed to be an adamantine element of his very being, had been suddenly changed for an equally and indescribable expression of serene joy, as if conscious that the great purpose of his life had been achieved."[1]

The spiritual triumph of Abraham Lincoln is clothed in the unfading words which, in the Second Inaugural, tell the story of the Civil War with the same fidelity which the address at Gettysburg gave to the philosophy of American democracy.[2] Both addresses unite, in Lincoln's characteristic manner, the intellectual and emotional elements of style. The first of these elements predominates in the dedication address; the second element is the more impressive in the inaugural. The theme of the earlier

1 Tarbell, II: 232. 2 Page 280, Appendix.

speech is directed to a single end. That of the inaugural has a double purpose: to comment upon the more striking events of the pending tragedy, and to divine their meaning in the light of religion. The thought of the first is more elevated; that of the second is familiar and touching. The language of the one is a prophecy of freedom; that of the other is radiant with the Christian spirit of peace. One addresses the historic sense and discernment; the other appeals directly and powerfully to the heart. Both incite to high ideals of conduct, one in the accents of epic, the other in the voice of lyric, song.

In the first part of the Second Inaugural, one reads a truthful survey of the war. A parallel study is made of the motives and expectations of both sides. There is a certain staccato effect in the emotions that succeed each other as the sentences approach the relation of the terrible contest to the purposes of the Almighty. It was an unaccustomed step for a statesman to speak with such frankness and intimacy of a great war as God's means of purging a nation of its inveterate vices. He bears in his words the burden of shame long felt by those —by generations, even—whose spirit had bowed under the humiliation of human slavery in their midst. He speaks the prayer of a repentant nation

"that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away." Was so fierce a slaughter, among men of the same race equally devoted to liberty, in accord with "those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him"? And was the blood poured out on the battlefields due to the judgment of the Lord, which is "true and righteous altogether"? Such was Lincoln's faith. He found no contradiction between that faith and that perfection of the human spirit which could battle with equal firmness and regret. With the picture of the death-grapple before him, he could still say:

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Lincoln's own modest commentary on the Second Inaugural was drawn out by a letter of appreciation from the distinguished journalist, Thurlow Weed. Lincoln's acknowledgment, March 15, is a precious bit of interpretation of his own feeling and purpose as he composed this remarkable state-paper:

Dear Mr. Weed: Every one likes a compliment. Thank you for yours on my little notification speech and on the recent inaugural address. I expect the latter to wear as well as—perhaps better than—anything I have produced; but I believe it is not immediately popular. Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it. Truly yours,

A. Lincoln.

The Second Inaugural and Lincoln's comment upon it afford definite personal testimony with respect to the much mooted question of his religious beliefs. During his lifetime he was suspected of infidelity by the over-confidently pious. As late as 1874, in a lecture on Lincoln, Herndon asserted that his former law partner held anti-Christian views. Among the credulous, perhaps nothing so easily casts a shadow over a man's reputation as the circulation of some doubt about his religious stability. It is to the credit of the Christian sentiment of our day that the contemporary distrust of Lincoln's religious sincerity and conviction has largely vanished into emp-

tiness. Lincoln was, indeed, strictly independent in his religious reflections. He accepted nothing as final on the authority of priesthood or theology. In religion as well as in politics, his reason had to be satisfied before he trusted to emotion. His legal training, as well as his type of mind, inclined him to call for the evidence in any important matter. Mr. John W. Bunn, and others of Springfield, who knew him well, have averred to the writer that Lincoln was a regular attendant at the services of the Presbyterian church in that city; but he united with no denomination. From childhood he was a reader of the English Bible, and became more devoted in his study of it during his Presidency. He was particularly interested in the New Testament, but was well acquainted with the Old. Writing to Speed at one time, he said: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance upon faith, and you will live and die a better man."

Few men have afforded a story of religious evolution more interesting than Lincoln's. His experience, perhaps, was not strikingly exceptional; but it was definite and personally conducted, and brought satisfaction to him in trouble. Fresh and interesting light upon this subject has been presented by Mr.

BRONZE STATUETTE OF LINCOLN

By Truman Bartlett. Paris, 1877

Henry B. Rankin, in his "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln." In his important chapter on "What Religion Meant to Lincoln," Mr. Rankin reproduces his mother's account of Lincoln's own statement of his religious views, given to her in her home during his race for Congress when his opponents were seeking to discredit him. Declaring that his own thinking, as well as his contact with men of "widest culture" had opened up to him a "sea of questionings," through which he had groped his way to "a higher grasp of thought" reaching beyond this life with "clearness and satisfaction," he continued:

I do not see that I am more astray—though perhaps in a different direction—than many others whose points of view differ widely from each other in the sectarian denominations. They all claim to be Christians, and interpret their several creeds as infallible ones. Yet they differ and discuss these questionable subjects without settling them with any mutual satisfaction among themselves.

I doubt the possibility, or propriety, of settling the religion of Jesus Christ in the models of man-made creeds and dogmas. It was a spirit in the life that He laid stress and taught, if I read aright. I know I see it to be so with me.

The fundamental truths reported in the four gospels as from the lips of Jesus Christ, and that I heard from

if thinking aloud": "These gentlemen know that Judge Douglas does not care a cent whether slavery in the territories is voted up or voted down, for he has repeatedly told them so. They know that I *do* care." Lincoln then drew from his pocket a copy of the New Testament and continued: "I do not so understand this book." On the matter of his faith, he said: "I know that there is a God and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me, and I think He has, I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything; I know I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same, and they will find it so."[1]

Apparently nothing in his experience had, even momentarily, diverted his faith in the precepts of the Bible; and his life-long practice of personal sacrifice as well as his native sympathy for the unfortunate, shining out in so much that he did and said, entered into the creation of that beautiful spirit of charity for which Lincoln will ever be remembered. The soul of that spirit had at last been embodied in

1 Carpenter, "Six Months in the White House," pp. 162-164.

language whose union of sense and rhythm was the utmost that prose could give, in the inaugural which humanity will probably wish to quote,

> "As long as the heart has passions,
> As long as life has woes."

There had been numerous foreshadowings of these ripened convictions. In a letter to Cuthbert Bullitt, in 1862, in which he swept away the criticism made against the Federal blockade of New Orleans on the ground of a strong element of loyalists in Louisiana, Lincoln stated that he should do all he could to save the government. "I shall do nothing in malice. What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing."[1] In April, 1864, he wrote a letter to Albert G. Hodges of Kentucky,[2] in justification of his policy of employing negro soldiers in the army. The letter is a sagacious vindication of a policy that had offended the sensibilities of certain friends of the Union. Its closing paragraph, however, is especially significant as an admission of the flexible nature of his war policy, and as foreshowing the tenor of that religious intuition to which he gave such free and splendid expression upon taking the oath of office again a year afterward. In it he wrote:

1 Page 307, Appendix. 2 Page 318, Appendix.

I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

"All deep things are Song," said Carlyle. If the chaste and limpid speech in which Lincoln had tenderly invoked the spirit of charity and freedom from malice toward the enemy, had touched the note of lyric poetry, it also spoke the note of leadership. It was unmistakable in purpose and perseverance. The victory must be won. Time was nothing; the Union everything. His unswerving purpose to fight the issue out, as expressed with rare humanity in the closing days of his career, was but the re-affirmation of what he had said the previous year in Philadelphia:

We accepted this war for an object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God, I hope it will never end until that time. Speaking of the present campaign, General Grant is reported to have

said, "I am going through on this line if it takes all summer." This war has taken three years; it was begun or accepted upon the line of restoring the national authority over the whole national domain, and for the American people, and as far as my knowledge enables me to speak, I say we are going through on this line if it takes three years more.[1]

There was literary content, also, in Lincoln's critical aptitude. His early enthusiasm for reading the best in literature lost none of its freshness during the Presidency. In some ways it became stronger. In that veritable little source-book which the artist, F. B. Carpenter, has left us in his *Six Months at the White House,* much authentic light is thrown upon Lincoln's intellectual tastes and habits. During the time in which Mr. Carpenter was engaged in painting the Emancipation Proclamation scene, he was privileged to have many intimate conversations with the President. One of these conversations turned on the subject of Shakespeare. It was at the time when Edwin Booth was playing an engage-

1 Lincoln's letter of May 30, 1864, to Dr. Ide and others, in response to his receipt from them of "the preamble and resolutions of the American Baptist Home Mission Society," contains, besides a remarkably concise statement of his anti-slavery philosophy, two of the biblical quotations used ten months later in the Second Inaugural. Heartfelt sentiments of charity will be found also in Lincoln's two responses to serenades, November 9 and 10, 1864, after his reëlection.

ment in Washington. Lincoln said: "It matters not to me whether Shakespeare be well or ill acted; with him the thought suffices. . . . There is one passage of the play of 'Hamlet' which is very apt to be slurred over by the actor, or omitted altogether, which seems to me the choicest part of the play. It is the soliloquy of the king after the murder. It always struck me as one of the finest touches of nature in the world." Then, says Carpenter, the President, throwing himself into the very spirit of the scene, repeated from memory the entire passage, of nearly forty lines, "with a feeling and appreciation unsurpassed by anything I ever witnessed upon the stage. Remaining in thought for a few moments, he continued:

"The opening of the play of 'King Richard the Third' seems to me often entirely misapprehended. It is quite common for an actor to come upon the stage, and, in a sophomoric style, to begin with a flourish:

'Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York,
And all the clouds that lowered upon our house,
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried!'

Now," said he, "this is all wrong. Richard, you remember, had been, and was then, plotting the

destruction of his brothers, to make room for himself. Outwardly, the most loyal to the newly-crowned king, secretly he could scarcely contain his impatience at the obstacles still in the way of his own elevation. He appears upon the stage, just after the crowning of Edward, burning with repressed hate and jealousy. The prologue is the utterance of the most intense bitterness and satire." The President at this moment, says Carpenter, "unconsciously assuming the character" of the king, "repeated, also from memory, Richard's soliloquy, rendering it with a degree of force and power that made it seem like a new creation to me. Though familiar with the passage from boyhood, I can truly say that never till that moment had I fully appreciated its spirit. I could not refrain from laying down my palette and brushes, and applauding heartily, upon his conclusion, saying at the same time, half in earnest, that I was not sure but that he had made a mistake in the choice of a profession, considerably, as may be imagined, to his amusement. Mr. Sinclair has since repeatedly said to me that he never heard these choice passages of Shakespeare rendered with more effect by the most famous of modern actors."[1]

1 See Browne, p. 469.

A few evenings later, when Mr. Carpenter entered the President's study, the conversation again turned on Shakespeare, and the President read aloud several favorite passages from the plays. Leaning back in his chair, he said: "There is a poem that has been a great favorite with me for years, to which my attention was first called when I was a young man, by a friend, and which I afterward saw and cut from a newspaper, and carried in my pocket till by frequent reading I had it by heart." Lincoln then, half closing his eyes, repeated to Carpenter the poem by William Knox, beginning, "Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" Lincoln spoke also of "some quaint, queer verses, written . . . by Oliver Wendell Holmes, entitled, 'The Last Leaf,' one of which is inexpressibly touching." He then repeated the following verse:

> The mossy marbles rest
> On the lips that he has pressed
> In their bloom;
> And the names he loved to hear
> Have been carved for many a year
> On the tomb.[1]

Commenting on these verses, the President said: "For pure pathos, in my judgment there is nothing finer than those six lines in the English language!"

1 Whitney, pp. 484-485. Holmes wrote Whitney, Nov. 27, 1866: "Governor Andrews once told me that the President recited 'The Last Leaf' to him, entire, from memory."

Carpenter speaks of Burns as Lincoln's favorite poet. He also tells us of his having called the President's attention to Edwin Forrest's presentation, at Ford's Theatre, of *Richelieu*. When Lincoln, upon asking who wrote the play, learned that the author was Bulwer Lytton, he rejoined: "Ah! well, I knew Bulwer wrote novels, but I did not know he was a play-writer also. It may seem somewhat strange to say," he continued, "but I never read an entire novel in my life!" When Senator Harris of New York, who was present, remarked, "Is it possible?" the President said: "Yes, it is a fact. I once commenced 'Ivanhoe,' but never finished it." And Carpenter comments: "This statement, in this age of the world, seems almost incredible—but I give the circumstance as it occurred." Lincoln's preference for poetry as against prose literature led him to notice the minor as well as the major singers. Carpenter reports that the poet Nathaniel Parker Willis once told him of riding, on a certain occasion, with the President and Mrs. Lincoln, when the former referred to his poem "Parrhasius" and quoted several lines from it.

Another instance of Lincoln's devotion to Shakespeare appears in the artist's book. "In the spring of 1862, the President spent several days at Fortress

Monroe. . . . His favorite diversion was reading Shakespeare. One day . . . as he sat reading alone, he called to his aide in an adjoining room: 'You have been writing long enough, Colonel; come in here; I want to read you a passage in *Hamlet*.' He read the discussion on ambition between Hamlet and his courtiers, and the soliloquy on the nature of the future state. This was followed by a passage from *Macbeth*. Then opening to *King John*, he read from the third act the passage in which Constance bewails her imprisoned, lost boy." Lincoln then closed the book and repeated the words:

And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:
If that be true, I shall see my boy again.

Addressing his aide, he said: "Colonel, did you ever dream of a lost friend, and feel that you were holding sweet communion with that friend, and yet have a sad consciousness that it was not a reality?—just so I dream of my boy Willie." Then, overcome with emotion, "he dropped his head on the table, and sobbed aloud."

In a delightfully written essay of personal reminiscence on *Life in the White House*, John Hay speaks of Lincoln's fondness for Shakespeare, and

mentions especially *Hamlet, Macbeth,* and the historical plays, of which *Richard II* was his favorite. Mr. Hay is authority for the statement that Lincoln read Shakespeare more than all other authors together; that he was also fond of Hood and Burns, and read Bryant, Whittier, and Holmes; that the President was a light sleeper, and would sometimes go to bed with a volume of Hood in his hands—would even rise at midnight and visit his secretary's room to read aloud something that especially pleased him. Lincoln liked to read aloud, and would often do so for hours with a single secretary for his audience. He liked to witness a Shakespearean performance at the theater, and particularly delighted in the character of Falstaff as presented by Hackett. In a letter of acknowledgment to Hackett, August 17, 1863, Lincoln wrote:

My dear Sir: Months ago I should have acknowledged the receipt of your book and accompanying kind note; and I now have to beg your pardon for not having done so.

For one of my age, I have seen very little of the drama. The first presentation of Falstaff I ever saw was yours here, last winter or spring. Perhaps the best compliment I can pay is to say, as I truly can, I am very anxious to see it again. Some of Shake-

speare's plays I have never read; while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are *Lear, Richard III, Henry VIII, Hamlet,* and especially *Macbeth.* I think nothing equals *Macbeth.* It is wonderful.

Unlike you gentlemen of the profession, I think the soliloquy in *Hamlet* commencing "Oh, my offense is rank," surpasses that commencing "To be or not to be." But pardon this small attempt at criticism. I should like to hear you pronounce the opening speech of Richard III. Will you not soon visit Washington again? If you do so, please call and let me make your personal acquaintance. Yours truly,

A. Lincoln.

Other personal testimony of those who were well acquainted with Lincoln's reading tastes, while he was President, is available. Noah Brooks tells us that Lincoln was a lover of many philosophical books, and particularly liked Butler's *Analogy of Religion* and John Stuart Mill's essay on Liberty; that he had always hoped to get at Edwards' volume on the Will. Brooks mentions certain poems of Hood that were favorites: "Miss Kilmansegg and Her Golden Leg," "Faithless Sally Brown." Of Holmes, he mentions "September Gale," "The Last Leaf," "The Chambered Nautilus," and "Ballad of an Oysterman." Longfellow's "Psalm of Life"

and "Birds of Killingworth" are also mentioned. Lowell was known to Lincoln by his "Biglow Papers," at least.[1]

Probably no more interesting bit of personal observation of Lincoln's reading appetite has been recorded than that by General F. L. Viele, who accompanied the President and Secretaries Stanton and Chase on a visit to Fortress Monroe for "observation of affairs in that region." The general reports that it was "a most interesting study to see these men relieved for the moment from the surroundings of their onerous official duties." Speaking especially of Lincoln, General Viele says: "He would sit for hours during the trip, repeating the finest passages of Shakespeare's best plays, page after page of Browning, and whole cantos of Byron.[2] He was as familiar with *belles-lettres* as many men who make much more pretension to culture. His inexhaustible stock of anecdotes gave to superficial minds the impression that he was not a thoughtful and reflecting man, whereas the fact was directly the reverse. The anecdotes formed no more part of Mr. Lincoln's mind than a smile forms a part of the face."

1 Harper's Magazine, xxxl:220 ff.

2 This is the only reference to Browning in Lincoln's reading that we have. The testimony as to Byron is ample.

Few men have ever created a greater variety of impressions upon others than Abraham Lincoln; probably no other man was ever the subject of so great a diversity of criticism, good and bad. Southern critics were naturally the most caustic. At the beginning of the war, some of these spoke of him as "a drunken, brawling boor," addicted to tobacco and profanity. There were those who regarded him as coarse and ill at ease in the presence of others. His jocularity did not always fall gracefully upon the sensitive ears of polished diplomats from abroad; even the "finely-tempered mind" of our own Hawthorne, as Colonel Hay tells us, could not become enthusiastic over him, and it took close intimacy to bring Seward and Chase to recognize his virtues. Bates, his Attorney-General, with tastes for art and poetry, told Carpenter one day that he thought genius and talent were rarely combined in one individual. Asked by the painter to give his distinction, Bates replied: "Genius conceives; talent executes." Referring to the President, the cabinet officer said: "Mr. Lincoln comes very near being a perfect man, according to my ideal of manhood. He lacks but one thing. . . . His deficiency is in the element of *will*. . . . Why, if a man comes to him with a touching story, his judgment is almost certain to be

affected by it. Should the applicant be a *woman*, a wife, a mother, a sister,—in nine cases out of ten, her tears, if nothing else, are sure to prevail." Partisans of McClellan referred to the President as the "Nero who cracked jokes while Rome was burning." On the contrary, Lincoln referred to McClellan, who was a social favorite in Washington and much lionized in drawing-rooms, as a "pleasant and scholarly" gentleman, and put his kindly estimate of the general into a line of poetry by saying that,

"Even his failings lean to virtue's side."[1]

Intellectually, there was a great difference between Lincoln and his general. This is strikingly discoverable in the latter's own field as head of the Army of the Potomac, as a reader of the correspondence between them cannot but conclude. This difference appears with special impressiveness in Lincoln's letter to the general of October 13, 1862, interpreting the respective advantages of McClellan and Lee by means of the mathematical symbol of arc and chord of a circle. Even in military affairs, Lincoln's natural sagacity has left us some sparks of his fine critical faculty.

1 The line is quoted from Carpenter, p. 227; it is from Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, line 164, and reads: "And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side."

This aspect of Lincoln's mind has been beautifully and luminously indicated by a certain French estimate of him. In his personal recollections of Lincoln, the outgrowth of a visit to this country early in 1865, the Marquis de Chambrun, friend of De Tocqueville, wrote that Lincoln's personal appearance "denoted a remarkable intelligence, great strength of penetration, tenacity of will, and elevated instincts. . . . I have heard him give his opinion on statesmen, argue political problems, always with astounding precision and justness. I have heard him speak of a woman who was considered beautiful, discuss the particular character of her appearance, distinguish what was praiseworthy from what was open to criticism, all with the sagacity of an artist. Lately two letters in which he speaks of Shakespeare, and in particular of *Macbeth,* have been published; his judgment evinces that sort of delicacy and soundness of taste that would honor a great literary critic."[1]

As an example of practical wisdom, Lincoln probably never wrote anything that surpassed his Last Public Speech, on the evening of April 11, 1865, two days after Lee's surrender to Grant, and three days before he was assassinated. The Gettysburg

1 Scribner's Monthly, xvi:813 f.

Address was his highest utterance combining the intellectual and intuitional elements of his imagination. The Second Inaugural is the high watermark of his poetic temper and intelligence. But this Last Public Speech must have an enduring place in the literature of practical political wisdom.[1] This speech was written out and presented to a vast crowd of citizens in Washington who had gathered on that evening at the White House to rejoice with the President over the close of the long, dreary war, and to hear what he had to say. The crowd had come to him the day before, but he told the people that if they would come the next evening, he would have something to say. It was an occasion on which he was anxious to speak with exactness and concision on the next great step before the nation. That was the subject of reconstruction. He stripped the question of its abstract implications. It mattered little to him whether the erring States had been, theoretically, out of the Union or not. The immediate question was their proper and unembarrassed return, that they might, with the whole country, recover from their crippled condition, and unite with all to restore the strength and future happiness of the Union. This had been his procedure in the case

1 Page 282, Appendix.

of Louisiana. With concessions in matters of detail, he saw no reason why such a generous policy should not be equally applicable to the other "Confederate States."

George Bancroft, the historian, struck the correct note of Lincoln's attitude when he said: "It was the nature of Lincoln to forgive. When hostilities ceased, he who had always sent forth the flag with every one of its stars in the field was eager to receive back his returning countrymen."

Lincoln's life of only fifty-six years was spent in exemplary preparation and service. The early conditions of his career called for heroic exertion and independence if it was to count for much. They left their impress upon his language, his bearing, his sympathy, and his imagination. He retained the "split-infinitive," and that frontier jocularity which was sometimes too realistic for the sensitive nerves of the more highly cultivated. He was as fun-loving and as human in his sensibilities as he was ambitious and reflective. Like Paracelsus, he had a native thirst for knowledge. He delighted in conversation and lent himself readily to the training that was to be found in public address. In these respects he was like his great political rival, but he was beyond that rival in the gift of fancy and his life-long passion

for reading and writing. He shaped his culture by the scholar's practice of conserving his time and by industrious quarrying in important fields of knowledge. His method he indicated in his advice to a law student: "It is only to get books and read and study them carefully. . . . Work, work, work is the main thing."[1] What he lacked in personal polish and comeliness was more than balanced by his power to reason clearly and in his appreciation of what was just and beautiful. He saw the prevailing issue of his time, and fitted himself to lead public opinion in the courage and processes of its solution. He believed the best government to be where the majority intelligence and will were made the sovereign specific for social and political ills. Slavery and democracy gave him the theme out of which grew his skill in debate and his far-seeing public policy. The Bible, the law, and poetry furnished him the means of education and steadfastness in the conduct of that policy. His splendid union of common-sense and idealism gave substance and finality to those masterpieces of pure English diction which the world will always treasure, and which, with the passing of time, give more and more validity to his position as a man of letters.

1 See letter to J. M. Brockman, page 303, Appendix.

The mind and work of Lincoln were not confined to a single age. He regarded his problem as significant for all times. He believed that the salvation of the Union was vitally concerned with the continuation of "free government upon the earth." Repeatedly he interpreted the Civil War struggle from this point of view. How forward was his look and his wisdom is more than ever apparent to us to-day. We now realize as never before, that but for the principles he held fast as a means of cementing the States of the Union together, under the ægis of one flag and one national spirit, the cause of government responsible to the people might have, for a time at least, "perished from the earth." It was necessary for united America to throw its power into the scales of a world war to prevent the force of absolutism from again becoming the dominant regime in Europe. In these days it has become increasingly clear to us that the power of America has been indispensable to preserve what Lincoln called the inestimable jewel of liberty, not only in Europe, where it has made substantial progress, but from jeopardy in our part of the world as well. The wonderful growth of our national strength and faith in freedom since the Civil War gives real potency to President Wilson's fine phrase, "The

world must be made safe for democracy." The world is discovering this as the genuine *American spirit,* made secure and prophetic by the remarkable personality and insight of Lincoln. This, chiefly, let us say, gives soul and permanence to the literature he has left us.

APPENDIX

Selections from Lincoln's Works

SELECTIONS FROM LINCOLN'S WORKS

Introduction

The following selections from Lincoln's works are based on the well known edition of Lincoln's Complete Works, by Nicolay and Hay. Permission to reproduce these selections here has been kindly granted by The Century Company. As a matter of fact, there is as yet no complete edition of Lincoln's writings, although the Nicolay and Hay edition is so far complete that it is still the most important resource for students of the great war President. New Lincoln materials appear from time to time. Miss Tarbell's first edition of her "Life of Abraham Lincoln" added nearly two hundred pages of unpublished letters, etc. More recently, Gilbert A. Tracy's "Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln" brought upwards of three hundred and fifty more Lincoln letters together for the first time. Other letters yet unpublished are known to exist, and it is believed that time will reveal still others written by Lincoln.

The selections which follow are not inclusive of all that Lincoln wrote of literary value. At least

the writer of this volume would not convey such an impression. But they are representative of Lincoln as a man of letters, and undoubtedly include his finest work. They include not only those writings which illustrate the man and his mind, but those which have especial significance for our own time and value for the time to come.

ADDRESSES AND STATE PAPERS

Lincoln's Early Political Ambition

In 1832, after serving as captain in the Black Hawk war, in a "bloodless campaign," Lincoln returned to New Salem and became a candidate for the Illinois legislature. He issued the following address to the voters of Sangamon county. It contains his views on the issues of the time—internal improvements, public education, and the regulation of state finance. He was now entering his twenty-third year, and had come from Indiana but two years before. His development in style and in knowledge of public affairs had been rapid. His youth was probably the chief cause of his defeat, although of the two hundred and eighty-four votes cast in his home precinct of New Salem he received all but seven.

Fellow Citizens: Having become a candidate for the honorable office of one of your Representatives in the next General Assembly of this state, in accordance with an established custom and the principles of true republicanism, it becomes my duty to make known to you, the people whom I propose to represent, my sentiments with regard to local affairs.

Time and experience have verified to a demonstration the public utility of internal improvements. That the poorest and most thinly populated countries would be greatly benefited by the opening of good roads, and in the clearing of navigable streams within their limits, is what no person will deny. Yet it is folly to undertake works of this or any other kind without first knowing that we are able to finish them—as half-finished work generally proves to be labor lost. There cannot justly be any objection to having railroads and canals, any more than to other good things, provided they cost nothing. The only objection is to paying

for them; and the objection arises from want of ability to pay. . . .

(Then follow six paragraphs in which Lincoln argues that although railroad communication would be the more reliable and useful, the estimated cost of the proposed line between "some eligible point on the Illinois river," via Jacksonville, to Springfield, namely, $290,000, made the improvement of the Sangamon River "an object much better suited to our infant resources.")

It appears that the practice of loaning money at exorbitant rates of interest has already been opened as a field for discussion; so I suppose I may enter upon it without claiming the honor, or risking the danger, which may await its first explorer. It seems as though we are never to have an end to this baneful and corroding system, acting almost as prejudicially to the general interests of the community as a direct tax of several thousand dollars annually laid on each county for the benefit of a few individuals only, unless there be a law made fixing the limits of usury. A law for this purpose, I am of opinion, may be made without materially injuring any class of people. In cases of extreme necessity, there could always be means found to cheat the law; while in all other cases it would have its intended effect. I would favor the passage of a law on this subject which might not be very easily evaded. Let it be such that the labor and difficulty of evading it could only be justified in cases of greatest necessity.

Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we, as a people, can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance, even on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be de-

rived from all being able to read the Scriptures, and other works both of a religious and moral nature, for themselves.

For my part, I desire to see the time when education—and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise, and industry—shall become much more general than at present, and should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate that happy period.

With regard to existing laws, some alterations are thought to be necessary. Many respectable men have suggested that our estray laws, the law respecting the issuing of executions, the road law, and some others, are deficient in their present form, and require alterations. But considering the great probability that the framers of those laws were wiser than myself, I should prefer not meddling with them, unless they were first attacked by others; in which case I should feel it both a privilege and a duty to take that stand which, in my view, might tend most to the advancement of justice.

But, fellow citizens, I shall conclude. Considering the great degree of modesty which should always attend youth, it is probable I have already been more presuming than becomes me. However, upon the subjects of which I have treated, I have spoken as I have thought. I may be wrong in regard to any or all of them; but, holding it a sound maxim that it is better only sometimes to be right than at all times to be wrong, so soon as I discover my opinions to be erroneous I shall be ready to renounce them.

Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young and unknown to many of you. I was born and have ever remained in the most humble walks of life. I have

no wealthy or popular relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the country, and if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate. But if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined.

Your friend and fellow citizen,

A. LINCOLN.

FROM THE PEORIA SPEECH. OCTOBER 16, 1854

This speech will be found in Nicolay and Hay. It contains more quotations than any other speech Lincoln made. The larger share of these, as usual with him, were from the Bible. Outside of the Bible, Lincoln was accustomed to quote most freely from Shakespeare. This speech was his stepping-stone to the Presidency.

I PARTICULARLY object to the new position which the avowed principle of this Nebraska law gives to slavery in the body politic. I object to it because it assumes that there can be moral right in the enslaving of one man by another. I object to it as a dangerous dalliance for free people—a sad evidence that, feeling, over-prosperity, we forget right; that liberty as a principle we have ceased to revere. I object to it because the Fathers of the Republic eschewed and rejected it. The argument of "necessity" was the only argument they ever admitted in favour of slavery, and so far, and so far only as it carried them, did they ever go. They found the institution existing among us, which they could not help, and they cast the blame on the British king for having permitted its introduction. Thus we see the plain, unmistakable spirit of their age towards slavery was hostility to the principle, and toleration only by necessity.

But now it is to be transformed into a *sacred right*. . . . Henceforth it is to be the chief jewel of the nation—the very figure-head of the ship of State.

Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration, that for some men to enslave others is a sacred right of self-government. These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon; and whoever holds to the one must despise the other. . . .

Our Republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us purify it. Let us turn and wash it white in the spirit if not the blood of the Revolution. Let us turn slavery from its claims of moral right, back upon its existing legal rights and its arguments of necessity. Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it, and there let it rest in peace. Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it the practices and policy which harmonize with it. Let North and South, let all Americans, let all lovers of liberty everywhere, join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but we shall have so saved it as to make and to keep it for ever worthy of the saving.

Speech on a House Divided Against Itself. June 26, 1858

Lincoln gave this speech before the Republican State Convention in Springfield, which named him for United States senator against Douglas. It comprehends at the outset Lincoln's philosophic grasp of the slavery question as it presented itself at that time in America. It contains a clear history of the events leading to the Kansas-Nebraska legislation sponsored by Douglas, with an analysis of its meaning. The effective figure connecting Stephen A. Douglas, Franklin Pierce, Roger B. Taney, and James Buchanan with the construction of the pro-slavery policy implied in the Douglas programme was a challenge Douglas was compelled to answer. It was Lincoln's method of making the historical drift of slavery-extension clear to the public mind. It is interesting to compare the close of this speech with that of the Cooper Institute Address, two years later.

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Have we no tendency to the latter condition? Let any one who doubts, carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination—piece of machinery, so to speak—compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision. Let him consider not only what work the machinery is adapted to do, and how well adapted; but also let him study the history of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather fail, if he can, to trace the evidences of design and concert of action among its chief architects from the beginning.

The new year of 1854 found slavery excluded from more than half the states by state constitutions, and from most of the national territory by congressional prohibition. Four days later commenced the struggle which ended in repealing that congressional prohibition. This opened all the national territory to slavery, and was the first point gained.

But so far, Congress only had acted; and an indorsement by the people, real or apparent, was indispensable

to save the point already gained and give chance for more.

This necessity had not been overlooked, but had been provided for, as well as might be, in the notable argument of *Squatter Sovereignty,* otherwise called *sacred right of self-government,* which latter phrase, though expressive of the only rightful basis of any government, was so perverted in this attempted use of it, as to amount to just this: That if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object. That argument was incorporated into the Nebraska bill itself, in the language which follows: "It being the true intent and meaning of this act, not to legislate slavery into any territory or state, nor to exclude it therefrom; but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." Then opened the roar of loose declamation in favor of *Squatter Sovereignty* and *sacred right of self-government.* "But," said opposition members, "let us amend the bill so as to expressly declare that the people of the territory may exclude slavery." "Not we," said the friends of the measure, and down they voted the amendment.

While the Nebraska bill was passing through Congress, a law case, involving the question of a negro's freedom, by reason of his owner having voluntarily taken him first into a free state and then into a territory covered by the congressional prohibition, and held him as a slave for a long time in each, was passing through the United States Circuit Court for the District of Missouri; and both Nebraska bill and lawsuit were brought to a decision, in the same month of May, 1854. The negro's name was Dred Scott, which name now designates the decision finally made in the case. Before the then next presidential election, the law case came to, and was argued in, the Supreme Court of the United States; but the decision of it was deferred until after the election. Still, before the elec-

tion, Senator Trumbull, on the floor of the Senate, requested the leading advocate of the Nebraska bill to state his opinion whether the people of a territory can constitutionally exclude slavery from their limits, and the latter answers: "That is a question for the Supreme Court."

The election came. Mr. Buchanan was elected, and the indorsement, such as it was, secured. That was the second point gained. The indorsement, however, fell short of a clear popular majority by nearly four hundred thousand votes, and so, perhaps, was not overwhelmingly reliable and satisfactory. The outgoing President, in his last annual message, as impressively as possible echoed back upon the people the weight and authority of the indorsement. The Supreme Court met again; did not announce their decision, but ordered a reargument. The presidential inauguration came, and still no decision of the Court; but the incoming President in his inaugural address fervently exhorted the people to abide by the forthcoming decision, whatever it might be. Then, in a few days, came the decision.

The reputed author of the Nebraska bill finds an early occasion to make a speech at this capital, indorsing the Dred Scott decision, and vehemently denouncing all opposition to it. The new President, too, seizes the early occasion of the Silliman letter to indorse and strongly construe that decision, and to express his astonishment that any different view had ever been entertained!

At length a squabble springs up between the President and the author of the Nebraska bill, on the mere question of fact whether the Lecompton constitution was, or was not, in any just sense, made by the people of Kansas; and in that quarrel, the latter declares that all he wants is a fair vote for the people, and that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up. I do not understand his declaration that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted

up, to be intended by him other than as an apt definition of the policy he would impress upon the public mind—the principle for which he declares he has suffered so much, and is ready to suffer to the end. And well may he cling to that principle. If he has any parental feeling, well may he cling to it. That principle is the only shred left of his original Nebraska doctrine. Under the Dred Scott decision, "squatter sovereignty" squatted out of existence, tumbled down like temporary scaffolding—like the mold at the foundry, served through one blast, and fell back into loose sand—helped to carry an election, and then was kicked to the winds. His late joint struggle with the Republicans against the Lecompton constitution, involves nothing of the original Nebraska doctrine. That struggle was made on a point—the right of the people to make their own constitution—upon which he and the Republicans have never differed.

The several points of the Dred Scott decision in connection with Senator Douglas's "care not" policy, constitute the piece of machinery in its present state of advancement. This was the third point gained. The working points of that machinery are:

First. That no negro slave, imported as such from Africa, and no descendant of such slave, can ever be a citizen of any state, in the sense of that term as used in the Constitution of the United States. This point is made in order to deprive the negro, in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision of the United States Constitution which declares that "citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States."

Secondly. That "subject to the Constitution of the United States," neither Congress nor a territorial legislature can exclude slavery from any United States territory. This point is made in order that individual men may fill up the territories with slaves, without danger of losing them as property, and thus enhance

the chances of permanency to the institution through all the future.

Thirdly. That whether the holding a negro in actual slavery in a free state makes him free as against the holder, the United States Courts will not decide, but will leave to be decided by the courts of any slave state the negro may be forced into by the master. This point is made, not to be pressed immediately, but if acquiesced in for a while, and apparently indorsed by the people at an election, then to sustain the logical conclusion that what Dred Scott's master might lawfully do with Dred Scott in the free state of Illinois, every other master may lawfully do, with any other one, or one thousand slaves in Illinois, or in any other free state.

Auxiliary to all this, and working hand in hand with it, the Nebraska doctrine, or what is left of it, is to educate and mold public opinion, at least Northern public opinion, not to care whether slavery is voted down or voted up. This shows exactly where we now are, and partially, also, whither we are tending.

It will throw additional light on the latter to go back and run the mind over the string of historical facts already stated. Several things will now appear less dark and mysterious than they did when they were transpiring. The people were to be left "perfectly free," "subject only to the Constitution." What the Constitution had to do with it outsiders could not then see. Plainly enough now, it was an exactly fitted niche for the Dred Scott decision to afterward come in, and declare the perfect freedom of the people to be just no freedom at all. Why was the amendment expressly declaring the right of the people voted down? Plainly enough now, the adoption of it would have spoiled the niche for the Dred Scott decision. Why was the Court decision held up? Why even a senator's individual opinion withheld till after the presidential election? Plainly enough now, the speaking out then would have damaged the "perfectly free" argument upon which

the election was to be carried. Why the outgoing President's felicitation on the indorsement? Why the delay of a reargument? Why the incoming President's advance exhortation in favor of the decision? These things look like the cautious patting and petting of a spirited horse, preparatory to mounting him, when it is dreaded that he may give the rider a fall. And why the hasty after-indorsement of the decision by the President and others?

We cannot absolutely know that all these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert. But when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places, and by different workmen—Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James,[1] for instance—and we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few, not omitting even scaffolding—or if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in—in such a case, we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft, drawn up before the first blow was struck.

It should not be overlooked that by the Nebraska bill the people of a state as well as territory were to be left "perfectly free," "subject only to the Constitution." Why mention a state? They were legislating for territories, and not for or about states. Certainly the people of a state are and ought to be subject to the Constitution of the United States; but why is mention of this lugged into this merely territorial law? Why

1 Stephen A. Douglas, senator from Illinois; Franklin Pierce, ex-President of the United States; Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice of the United States; and James Buchanan, President of the United States.

are the people of a territory and the people of a state therein lumped together, and their relation to the Constitution therein treated as being precisely the same? While the opinion of the Court by Chief Justice Taney, in the Dred Scott case, and the separate opinions of all the concurring judges, expressly declare that the Constitution of the United States neither permits Congress nor a territorial legislature to exclude slavery from any United States territory, they all omit to declare whether or not the same Constitution permits a state or the people of a state to exclude it. Possibly this is a mere omission; but who can be quite sure if McLean or Curtis had sought to get into the opinion a declaration of unlimited power in the people of a state to exclude slavery from their limits, just as Chase and Mace sought to get such declaration in behalf of the people of a territory, into the Nebraska bill—I ask, who can be quite sure that it would not have been voted down in the one case as it had been in the other? The nearest approach to the point of declaring the power of a state over slavery is made by Judge Nelson. He approaches it more than once, using the precise idea, and almost the language too, of the Nebraska act. On one occasion his exact language is "except in cases where the power is restrained by the Constitution of the United States, the law of the state is supreme over the subject of slavery within its jurisdiction." In what cases the power of the state is so restrained by the United States Constitution is left an open question, precisely as the same question, as to the restraint on the power of the territories, was left open in the Nebraska act. Put this and that together, and we have another nice little niche, which we may, ere long, see filled with another Supreme Court decision, declaring that the Constitution of the United Stated does not permit *a state* to exclude slavery from its limits. And this may especially be expected if the doctrine of "care not whether slavery be voted down or voted up" shall gain upon the public mind

sufficiently to give promise that such a decision can be maintained when made.

Such a decision is all that slavery now lacks of being alike lawful in all the states. Welcome or unwelcome, such decision is probably coming, and will soon be upon us, unless the power of the present political dynasty shall be met and overthrown. We shall lie down, pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their state free, and we shall awake to the reality instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave state. To meet and overthrow the power of that dynasty is the work now before all those who would prevent that consummation. That is what we have to do. How can we best do it?

There are those who denounce us openly to their own friends, and yet whisper us softly that Senator Douglas is the aptest instrument there is with which to effect that object. They wish us to infer all from the fact that he now has a little quarrel with the present head of the dynasty, and that he has regularly voted with us on a single point, upon which he and we have never differed. They remind us that he is a great man and that the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. But "a living dog is better than a dead lion." Judge Douglas, if not a dead lion, for this work, is at least a caged and toothless one. How can he oppose the advances of slavery? He don't care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the "public heart" to care nothing about it. A leading Douglas Democratic newspaper thinks Douglas's superior talent will be needed to resist the revival of the African slave trade. Does Douglas believe an effort to revive that trade is approaching? He has not said so. Does he really think so? But if it is, how can he resist it? For years he has labored to prove it a sacred right of white men to take negro slaves into the new territories. Can he possibly show that it is a less sacred right to buy them where they can be bought cheapest?

And unquestionably they can be bought cheaper in Africa than in Virginia. He has done all in his power to reduce the whole question of slavery to one of a mere right of property; and, as such, how can he oppose the foreign slave trade? How can he refuse that trade in that "property" shall be "perfectly free," unless he does it as a protection to home production? And as the home producers will probably not ask the protection, he will be wholly without a ground of opposition.

Senator Douglas holds, we know, that a man may rightfully be wiser to-day than he was yesterday—that he may rightfully change when he finds himself wrong. But can we, for that reason, run ahead, and infer that he will make any particular change, of which he himself has given no intimation? Can we safely base our action upon any such vague inference?

Now, as ever, I wish not to misrepresent Judge Douglas's position, question his motives, or do aught that can be personally offensive to him. Whenever, if ever, he and we can come together on principle, so that our great cause may have assistance from his great ability, I hope to have interposed no adventitious obstacle. But, clearly, he is not now with us—he does not pretend to be—he does not promise ever to be.

Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends—those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work, who do care for the result. Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all then to falter now?—now, when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful.

We shall not fail—if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it, but sooner or later the victory is sure to come.

Cooper Institute Address. February 27, 1860

Greeley, whose sympathies had been with the aspirations of Douglas in the great debate, wrote thus of Lincoln's reception in New York on the occasion of this address: "No man has been welcomed by such an audience of the intellect and mental culture of our city, since the days of Clay and Webster." Arnold, in his life of Lincoln, gives this estimate of the address: "There is compressed into it such an amount of historical learning, stated in the simplest language, as within such a scope, is perhaps unparalleled."[1]

Mr. President and Fellow Citizens of New York: The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation. In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times*, Senator Douglas said:

Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now.

I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be, "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787, and under which the present government first went into operation, and twelve sub-

1 Whitney, "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln" (1892), says, "Lincoln's 'Cooper Institute' speech is a far greater intellectual production than the Gettysburg speech," page 203.

sequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time. Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine," for the present, as being "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood "just as well, and even better, than we do now?"

It is this: Does the proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our federal government to control as to slavery in our federal territories?

Upon this, Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue—this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we." Let us now inquire whether the "thirty-nine," or any of them, ever acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding. In 1784, three years before the Constitution, the United States then owning the Northwestern Territory, and no other, the Congress of the Confederation had before them the question of prohibiting slavery in that territory; and four of the "thirty-nine" who afterward framed the Constitution were in that Congress and voted on that question. Of these, Roger Sherman, Thomas Mifflin, and Hugh Williamson voted for the prohibition, thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the federal government to con-

trol as to slavery in federal territory. The other of the four, James McHenry, voted against the prohibition, showing that for some cause he thought it improper to vote for it.

In 1787, still before the Constitution, but while the convention was in session framing it, and while the Northwestern Territory still was the only territory owned by the United States, the same question of prohibiting slavery in the territory again came before the Congress of the Confederation; and two more of the "thirty-nine" who afterward signed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on the question. They were William Blount and William Few; and they both voted for the prohibition—thus showing that in their understanding no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory. This time the prohibition became a law, being part of what is now well known as the ordinance of '87.

The question of federal control of slavery in the territories seems not to have been directly before the convention which framed the original Constitution; and hence it is not recorded that the "thirty-nine," or any of them, while engaged on that instrument, expressed any opinion on that precise question.

In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution, an act was passed to enforce the ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine"—Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word of opposition, and finally passed both branches without ayes and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, Wm. S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thos. Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham

Baldwin, Rufus King, William Paterson, George Clymer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, and James Madison.

This shows that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct principle, and their oath to support the Constitution, would have constrained them to oppose the prohibition.

Again, George Washington, another of the "thirty-nine," was then President of the United States and as such approved and signed the bill, thus completing its validity as a law, and thus showing that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original Constitution, North Carolina ceded to the federal government the country now constituting the state of Tennessee; and a few years later Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the states of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding states that the federal government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this, slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances, Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere with it—take control of it—even there, to a certain extent. In 1798 Congress organized the territory of Mississippi. In the act of organization they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the territory from any place without the United States, by fine, and giving freedom to slaves so bought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the "thirty-nine" who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin. They all probably voted for it.

Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record if, in their understanding, any line dividing local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, properly forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory.

In 1803 the federal government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain of our own states; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804 Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the state of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it—take control of it—in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

1st. That no slave should be imported into the territory from foreign parts.

2d. That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

3d. That no slave should be carried into it, except by the owner, and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law, and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without ayes or nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the "thirty-nine." They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi, it is probable they both voted for it. They would not have allowed it to pass without recording their opposition to it if, in their understanding, it violated either the line properly dividing local from federal authority, or any provision of the Constitution.

In 1819-1820 came and passed the Missouri question.

Many votes were taken, by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the "thirty-nine"—Rufus King and Charles Pinckney—were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition and against all compromises. By this, Mr. King showed that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery in federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney, by his votes, showed that, in his understanding there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue, which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-1820, there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting John Langdon, Roger Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read each twice, and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the "thirty-nine" whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which, by the text, they understood better than we, is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers "who framed the government under which we live," who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms they "understood just as well, and even better, than we do now"; and twenty-one of them—a clear majority of the whole "thirty-nine"—so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and willful perjury if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had

made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions under such responsibility speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against congressional prohibition of slavery in the federal territories, in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from federal authority, or some provision or principle of the Constitution, stood in the way, or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what appeared to them to be sufficient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient. It, therefore, would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because, in their understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory. The remaining sixteen of the "thirty-nine," so far as I have discovered, have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of federal control of slavery in the federal territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers, had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution; and, for the same reason, I have also omitted whatever understanding may have

been manifested by any of the "thirty-nine" even on any other phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave trade, and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it would appear to us that on the direct question of federal control of slavery in federal territories, the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among that sixteen were several of the most noted antislavery men of those times,—as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris,—while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution, twenty-one—a clear majority of the whole—certainly understood that no proper division of local from federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control slavery in the federal territories; while all the rest had probably the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question "better than we."

But, so far, I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original Constitution. In and by the original instrument, a mode was provided for amending it; and, as I have already stated, the present frame of "the government under which we live" consists of that original, and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that federal control of slavery in federal territories violates the Constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and, as I understand, they all fix upon provisions in these amendatory articles, and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court, in the Dred Scott case, plant themselves upon the fifth amendment,

which provides that no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law"; while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant themselves upon the tenth amendment, providing that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution" "are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

Now, it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution—the identical Congress which passed the act, already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress, but they were the identical, same individual men who, at the same session, and at the same time within the session, had under consideration, and in progress toward maturity, these constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The constitutional amendments were introduced before, and passed after, the act enforcing the ordinance of '87; so that, during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the ordinance, the constitutional amendments were also pending.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen of the framers of the original Constitution, as before stated, were preëminently our fathers who framed that part of "the government under which we live" which is now claimed as forbidding the federal government to control slavery in the federal territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in any one at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed, and carried to maturity at the same time, are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently absurd when coupled with the other affirmation, from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent, understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we—better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together, do certainly include those who may be fairly called "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." And so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. To those who now so declare I give not only "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now, and here, let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so, would be to discard all the lights of current experience—to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that a

proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" were of the same opinion —thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" used and applied principles, in other cases, which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from federal authority, or some part of the Constitution, forbids the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories, he is right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they "understood the question just as well and even better than we do now."

But enough! Let all who believe that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now," speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask, all Republicans desire, in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully, and fairly maintained. For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen,—as I suppose they

will not,—I would address a few words to the Southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still, when you speak of us Republicans, you do so only to denounce us as reptiles, or, at the best, as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to "Black Republicans." In all your contentions with one another, each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of "Black Republicanism" as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed, such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite—license, so to speak—among you to be admitted or permitted to speak at all. Now, can you or not be prevailed upon to pause and to consider whether this is quite just to us, or even to yourselves? Bring forward your charges and specifications, and then be patient long enough to hear us deny or justify.

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section—gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then, in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof does not touch the issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is a fact of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice,

the fault is ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have started—to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of whether our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section; and so meet us as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do you accept the challenge? No! Then you really believe that the principle which "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" thought so clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their official oaths, is in fact so clearly wrong as to demand your condemnation without a moment's consideration.

Some of you delight to flaunt in our faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that warning he had, as President of the United States, approved and signed an act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory, which act embodied the policy of the government upon that subject up to and at the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year after he penned it, he wrote Lafayette that he considered that prohibition a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his hope that we should at some time have a confederacy of free states.

Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who repudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative—eminently con-

servative—while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something of the sort.

What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried? We stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by "our fathers who framed the government under which we live"; while you with one accord reject, and scout, and spit upon that old policy, and insist upon substituting something new. True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You are divided on new propositions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave trade; some for a congressional slave code for the territories; some for Congress forbidding the territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the territories through the judiciary; some for the "gur-reat pur-rinciple" that "if one man would enslave another, no third man should object," fantastically called "popular sovereignty"; but never a man among you is in favor of federal prohibition of slavery in federal territories, according to the practice of "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the century within which our government originated. Consider, then, whether your claim of conservatism for yourselves, and your charge of destructiveness against us, are based on the most clear and stable foundations.

Again, you say we have made the slavery question more prominent than it formerly was. We deny it. We admit that it is more prominent, but we deny that we made it so. It was not we, but you, who discarded the old policy of the fathers. We resisted, and still resist, your innovation; and thence comes the greater prominence of the question. Would you have that question reduced to its former proportions? Go back to that old policy. What has been will be again, under

the same conditions. If you would have the peace of the old times, readopt the precepts and policy of the old times.

You charge that we stir up insurrections among your slaves. We deny it; and what is your proof? Harpers Ferry! John Brown! John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harpers Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that matter, you know it, or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true is simply malicious slander.

Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harpers Ferry affair, but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold no doctrine, and make no declaration, which were not held to and made by "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." You never dealt fairly by us in relation to this affair. When it occurred, some important state elections were near at hand, and you were in evident glee with the belief that, by charging the blame upon us, you could get an advantage of us in those elections. The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled. Every Republican man knew that, as to himself at least, your charge was a slander, and he was not much inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. Republican doctrines and declarations are accompanied with a continual protest against any interference whatever with your slaves, or with you about your slaves. Surely this does not encourage them to revolt. True, we do, in common with "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," declare our belief that slavery is

wrong; but the slaves do not hear us declare even this. For anything we say or do, the slaves would scarcely know there is a Republican party. I believe they would not, in fact, generally know it but for your misrepresentations of us in their hearing. In your political contests among yourselves, each faction charges the other with sympathy with Black Republicanism; and then, to give point to the charge, defines Black Republicanism to simply be insurrection, blood, and thunder among the slaves.

Slave insurrections are no more common now than they were before the Republican party was organized. What induced the Southampton insurrection, twenty-eight years ago, in which at least three times as many lives were lost as at Harpers Ferry? You can scarcely stretch your very elastic fancy to the conclusion that Southampton was "got up by Black Republicanism." In the present state of things in the United States, I do not think a general, or even a very extensive, slave insurrection is possible. The indispensable concert of action cannot be attained. The slaves have no means of rapid communication; nor can incendiary freemen, black or white, supply it. The explosive materials are everywhere in parcels; but there neither are, nor can be, supplied the indispensable connecting trains.

Much is said by Southern people about the affection of slaves for their masters and mistresses; and a part of it, at least, is true. A plot for an uprising could scarcely be devised and communicated to twenty individuals before some one of them, to save the life of a favorite master or mistress, would divulge it. This is the rule; and the slave revolution in Haiti was not an exception to it, but a case occurring under peculiar circumstances. The Gunpowder Plot of British history, though not connected with slaves, was more in point. In that case, only about twenty were admitted to the secret; and yet one of them, in his anxiety to save a friend, betrayed the plot to that friend, and, by consequence, averted the calamity. Occasional poi-

sonings from the kitchen, and open or stealthy assassinations in the field, and local revolts extending to a score or so, will continue to occur as the natural results of slavery; but no general insurrection of slaves, as I think, can happen in this country for a long time. Whoever much fears, or much hopes, for such an event, will be alike disappointed.

In the language of Mr. Jefferson, uttered many years ago, "It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably, and in such slow degrees as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their places be, *pari passu,* filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

Mr. Jefferson did not mean to say, nor do I, that the power of emancipation is in the federal government. He spoke of Virginia; and, as to the power of emancipation, I speak of the slaveholding states only. The federal government, however, as we insist, has the power of restraining the extension of the institution —the power to insure that a slave insurrection shall never occur on any American soil which is now free from slavery.

John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts, related in history, at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon, and John Brown's attempt at Harpers Ferry, were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on Old England in the one case, and on

New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things.

And how much would it avail you if you could, by the use of John Brown, Helper's book, and the like, break up the Republican organization? Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation, which cast at least a million and a half votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling—that sentiment—by breaking up the political organization which rallies around it. You can scarcely scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it out of the peaceful channel of the ballot box into some other channel? What would that other channel probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened or enlarged by the operation?

But you will break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your constitutional rights.

That has a somewhat reckless sound; but it would be palliated, if not fully justified, were we proposing, by the mere force of numbers, to deprive you of some right plainly written down in the Constitution. But we are proposing no such thing.

When you make these declarations you have a specific and well-understood allusion to an assumed constitutional right of yours to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication.

Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is that you will destroy the government, unless you be allowed to construe and force the Constitution as you please, on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin in all events.

This, plainly stated, is your language. Perhaps you will say the Supreme Court has decided the disputed constitutional question in your favor. Not quite so. But waiving the lawyer's distinction between dictum and decision, the court has decided the question for you in a sort of way. The court has substantially said, it is your constitutional right to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided court, by a bare majority of the judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact—the statement in the opinion that "the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution."

An inspection of the Constitution will show that the right of property in a slave is not "distinctly and expressly affirmed" in it. Bear in mind, the judges do not pledge their judicial opinion that such right is impliedly affirmed in the Constitution; but they pledge their veracity that it is "distinctly and expressly" affirmed there—"distinctly," that is, not mingled with anything else; "expressly," that is, in words meaning just that, without the aid of any inference, and susceptible of no other meaning.

If they had only pledged their judicial opinion that such right is affirmed in the instrument by implication, it would be open to others to show that neither the word "slave" nor "slavery" is to be found in the Constitution, nor the word "property," even, in any connection with language alluding to the things slave or slavery; and that wherever in that instrument the slave is alluded to, he is called a "person"; and wherever his master's legal right in relation to him is alluded to, it is spoken of as "service or labor which may be due"—as a debt payable in service or labor. Also

it would be open to show, by contemporaneous history, that this mode of alluding to slaves and slavery, instead of speaking of them, was employed on purpose to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.

To show all this is easy and certain.

When this obvious mistake of the judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live"—the men who made the Constitution—decided this same constitutional question in our favor long ago; decided it without division among themselves when making the decision; without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of facts.

Under all these circumstances, do you really feel yourselves justified to break up this government unless such a court decision as yours is shall be at once submitted to as a conclusive and final rule of political action? But you will not abide the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, "Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!"

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me—my money—was my own; and I had a clear right to keep it; but it was no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me, to extort my money, and the threat of destruction to the Union, to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

A few words now to Republicans. It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great confederacy shall

be at peace, and in harmony one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. Will it satisfy them if, in the future, we have nothing to do with invasions and insurrections? We know it will not. We so know, because we know we never had anything to do with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, What will satisfy them? Simply this: We must not only let them alone, but we must somehow convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly—done in acts as well as in words. Silence will not be tolerated—we must place ourselves avowedly with them.

Senator Douglas's new sedition law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits, or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free-state constitutions. The whole atmosphere must be disinfected from all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us.

I am quite aware they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone; do nothing to us, and say what you please about slavery." But we do let them alone —have never disturbed them—so that, after all, it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing, until we cease saying.

I am also aware they have not as yet in terms demanded the overthrow of our free-state constitutions. Yet those constitutions declare the wrong of slavery with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these constitutions will be demanded, and nothing be left to resist the demand. It is nothing to the contrary that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding, as they do, that slavery is morally right and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it as a legal right and a social blessing.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily

grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories, and to overrun us here in these free states? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of "don't care," on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to disunionists, reversing the Divine rule, and calling not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

Farewell Address at Springfield, Illinois. February 11, 1861

The burden of his oncoming task already weighed upon Lincoln as the moment approached when he was to leave the freedom of his western home to direct the uncertain helm of the national administration, which, under his incompetent predecessor, had been allowed so long to drift. The critical eyes of the impatient North were upon him; a declared and suspicious foe in the South was before him. The feelings native to his large heart were deeply stirred. He loved his neighbors with an affection which only such an occasion as this could fully disclose—an affection as sincere and unmistakable as their estimation of the tremendous task awaiting him must have been hazy and unrealized. There are various versions of the Farewell Address. Herndon, III: 486 f., reproduces one published in the Springfield papers and evidently ill-reported. A more beautiful form of it—the version which appears on this page—was later published by Nicolay and Hay, from the original manuscript.

Henry B. Rankin's version is a collation from the partial stenographic notes of reporters and the memory of friends who heard the address. See his "Recollections," p. 223.

My Friends: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Speech at Independence Hall, Philadelphia. February 22, 1861

This remarkable address summarizes the spirit of Lincoln's life and conclusions to the moment of its delivery. He was the deepest interpreter of his time of the spirit of the men who founded the republic. With the peculiar task before him, and conscious of the threats already made to assassinate him, he felt the striking kinship between their motives and his. This feeling inspired his words, which to us seem prophetic of the tragedy which closed his career.

I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live.

You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that declaration. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should

have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it.

Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called on to say a word when I came here. I supposed that I was merely to do something toward raising a flag. I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.

First Inaugural Address. March 4, 1861

This address was both an appeal and a warning to the seven Confederate States, organized under a provisional government at Montgomery, Alabama, during the month previous. The two contrasting views of the slavery issue are clearly stated, together with a succinct argument defining the nature of the Union and the obligation of the President to enforce its laws when broken. Secession is likened to anarchy, and the responsibility of possible civil war is shown to rest with the secessionists themselves. On the platform with the President were the retiring President Buchanan, ex-President Franklin Pierce, Chief-Justice Taney, who administered the oath of office, and Stephen A. Douglas, who chivalrously held the President's hat and cane during the address, and gracefully shook his hand in congratulation and assurance

of his loyalty to him, after its delivery. Douglas was splendidly loyal to the President until his death, which came suddenly on June 11 following, at the age of forty-eight.

Fellow Citizens of the United States: In compliance with a custom as old as the government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of his office."

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern states that by the accession of a Republican administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

Resolved, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the states, and especially the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any state or territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

I now reiterate these sentiments; and, in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the states when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause—as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

> No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution—to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause "shall be delivered up," their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by state authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should any one in any case be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely

unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again, in any law upon this subject, ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that "the citizen of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states?"

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules. And while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed, than to violate any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our national Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have, in succession, administered the executive branch of the government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these states is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, and the Union will endure for-

ever—it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again, if the United States be not a government proper, but an association of states in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it—break it, so to speak; but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen states expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787 one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union."

But if the destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the states be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no state upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence, within any state or states, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the states. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall perform it so far as practicable, unless my rightful

masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means, or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States, in any interior locality, shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word

to them. To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from—will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution—certainly would if such a right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guaranties and prohibitions, in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by state authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. *May* Congress prohibit slavery in the territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. *Must* Congress protect slavery in the territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitu-

tional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the government is acquiescence on one side or the other.

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the states to compose a new Union, as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissable; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position, assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding, in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still that evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never

become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

One section of our country believes slavery is right, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either

amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the national Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution—which amendment, however, I have not seen—has passed Congress, to the effect that the federal government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the states, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be

implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The chief magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have conferred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the states. The people themselves can do this also if they choose; but the executive, as such, has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present government, as it came to his hands, and to transmit it, unimpaired by him, to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief; and have, with equal wisdom, provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you

who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Seward's Thoughts for the President. April 1, 1861

On the first of April following the inauguration, William H. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, sent to the President a letter containing "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." He had misgivings about the President's ability to manage the complex situation before his administration, and suggested a vigorous domestic policy as well as an extremely dangerous foreign policy, intimating that he would be willing to direct these policies himself. Lincoln's reply was, as usual in emergencies, wisely temperate. He avoided the good chance the "Thoughts" offered for a rupture with his able but, in this instance, indiscreet cabinet official. A little later, June 5, Seward had revised his opinion of Lincoln. At that time he wrote to Mrs. Seward: "Executive force and vigor are rare qualities. The President is the best of us." This correspondence between Lincoln and Seward was not revealed to the public until it was published by Nicolay and Hay, in Vol. III of their "Abraham Lincoln, a History."

First. We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign.

Second. This, however, is not culpable, and it has even been unavoidable. The presence of the Senate, with the need to meet applications for patronage, have prevented attention to other and more grave matters.

Third. But further delay to adopt and prosecute our policies for both domestic and foreign affairs would not only bring scandal on the administration, but danger upon the country.

Fourth. To do this we must dismiss the applicants for office. But how? I suggest that we make the local appointments forthwith, leaving foreign or general ones for ulterior and occasional action.

Fifth. The policy at home. I am aware that my views are singular, and perhaps not sufficiently explained. My system is built upon this idea as a ruling one, namely, that we must **change the question before the public from one upon slavery, or about slavery,** for a question upon **union or disunion:**

In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question, to one of patriotism or union.

The occupation or evacuation of Fort Sumter, although not in fact a slavery or a party question, is so regarded. Witness the temper manifested by the Republicans in the free states, and even by the Union men in the South.

I would therefore terminate it as a safe means for changing the issue. I deem it fortunate that the last administration created the necessity.

For the rest, I would simultaneously defend and reënforce all the ports in the gulf, and have the navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade. Put the island of Key West under martial law.

This will raise distinctly the question of union or disunion. I would maintain every fort and possession in the South.

For Foreign Nations

I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once.

I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention.

And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France,

Would convene Congress and declare war against them.

But whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

Devolve it on some member of his cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide.

It is not in my especial province;

But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility.

NOTE IN REPLY TO SECRETARY SEWARD'S "THOUGHTS"

EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 1, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: Since parting with you I have been considering your paper dated this day, and entitled "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." The first proposition in it is, "First, We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign."

At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said: "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts." This had your distinct approval at the

time; and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

Again, I do not perceive how the reënforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a slavery or a party issue, while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

The news received yesterday in regard to St. Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

Upon your closing propositions—that "whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

"Devolve it on some member of his cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide"—I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason, or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all the cabinet.

Your obedient servant,

A. Lincoln.

Message to Congress. December 1, 1862

This excerpt from Lincoln's second annual message to Congress is representative of his style and clarity of thought in formal state papers. Already he had deeply considered the question of slavery, and had exchanged views on the subject with his cabinet advisers and with statesmen in Congress. He dissented from those who thought that colonization should be made compulsory; he favored colonizing the negroes in Central America, but did not favor driving them out against their wishes. He advocated in this message a Constitutional Amendment authorizing compensated emancipation and the expenditure of public money to effect colonization. He discussed also the economics of negro labor, and closed his message with an appeal for well-considered and concerted action on the vital question of freeing the slaves. Party spirit was too deeply rooted at the time to surrender itself to the ideal of concerted national policy in a great emergency. Democrats and Republicans did not become emancipated from party interest sufficiently for action with singleness of aim until the United States made war on Germany and Austria-Hungary (1917).

The Civil War, which has so radically changed for the moment the occupations and habits of the American people, has necessarily disturbed the social condition and affected very deeply the prosperity of the nations with which we have carried on a commerce that has been steadily increasing throughout a period of half a century. It has, at the same time, excited political ambitions and apprehensions which have produced a profound agitation throughout the civilized world. In this unusual agitation we have foreborne from taking part in any controversy between foreign States, and between parties or factions in such States. We have attempted no propagandism and acknowledged no revolution. But we have left to every nation the exclusive conduct and management of its own affairs. . . .

The proposed emancipation would shorten the war, perpetuate peace, insure this increase of population, and proportionately the wealth of the country. With these, we should pay all the emancipation would cost,

together with our other debt, easier than we should pay our other debt without it. . . .

I cannot make it better known than it already is that I favor colonization. And yet I wish to say there is an objection urged against free colored persons remaining in the country which is largely imaginary, if not sometimes malicious.

It is insisted that their presence would injure and displace white labor and white laborers. If there ever could be a proper time for mere catch arguments, that time surely is not now. In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and in eternity. Is it true, then, that colored people can displace any more white labor by being free than by remaining slaves? If they stay in their old places, they jostle no white laborers; if they leave their old places, they leave them open to white laborers. . . . Emancipation, even without deportation, would probably enhance the wages of white labor, and very surely would not reduce them. . . . With deportation, even to a limited extent, enhanced wages to white labor is mathematically certain. Labor is like any other commodity in the market—increase the demand for it, and you increase the price for it. Reduce the supply of black labor by colonizing the black labor out of the country, and by precisely so much you increase the demand for, and wages of, white labor. . . .

Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honour or dishonour, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it.

We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure

freedom to the free—honourable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will for ever applaud, and God must for ever bless.

Emancipation Proclamation. January 1, 1863

The President's disappointment over the poor military results during the first part of the war influenced the moment of emancipation. It was read by the President to his Cabinet July 22, 1862, and on September 23, the Preliminary Proclamation was given to the country, closely following the Federal advantage in the battle of Antietam. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the final proclamation. Lincoln's own story of the proclamation is given by Carpenter in "Six Months at the White House," chap. vii. An interesting reminiscence from Leonard Swett is told by Miss Tarbell, II: 113-114, who reproduces Carpenter's picture of the emancipation scene, page 116. Just before January 1, the time fixed in the preliminary proclamation for the issue of the final document, some of the more radical friends of emancipation feared the President would weaken and not go the whole length. Dr. Sunderland, chaplain of the Senate, with a friend, called on Mr. Lincoln to urge fidelity to his promise. In the interview, in which he did not indicate his final course, the President mentioned *Æsop's Fables* as one of his "first books." Secretary Chase wrote the final paragraph invoking divine favor. Within two months after the final proclamation, British sentiment had set decidedly in favor of the Union cause.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state, or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then,

thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the states and parts of states, if any, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any state, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such state shall have participated, shall in the absence of strong countervailing testimony be deemed conclusive evidence that such state and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the states and parts of states wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Caro-

lina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labour faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favour of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and
[L. S.] of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:
WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

Address at the Dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg. November 19, 1863

The fame of the Gettysburg Address has subjected it to the most untiring scrutiny for possible antecedents of ideas and phrasings. Especially has the oft-quoted last clause of the Address invited search for parallels. Herndon found among Lincoln's papers, left in the law office at Springfield after his election to the Presidency, a pamphlet containing a sermon delivered by Theodore Parker, at Boston, July 4, 1858. The sermon contains the following sentence, marked in the margin: "Democracy is Direct Self-Government, over all the people, by all the people, for all the people." In another place in the sermon, substantially the same phrasing is marked in the Lincoln copy. Lincoln's fine words may have been reminiscent of his reading of Parker's sermon. Eight years before (1850), Parker had used virtually the same description of democracy in a speech before the New England Anti-Slavery convention. Webster, in his second speech on Foot's Resolution, January 26, 1830, had used substantially the same language. It is possible to trace similar phrasing elsewhere, as far back as the preface of Wycliffe's Bible (1384). Mr. Isaac Markens, of New York City, in "Lincoln's Masterpiece," privately printed, exhibits a few interesting resemblances between Everett's Oration and Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg, and points out that although Everett sent his oration to Lincoln before the dedication took place, the "parallelisms may be explained as mere coincidences." Cf. Brooks' "Washington in Lincoln's Time." Whatever may be the antecedents of the great Address in Lincoln's mind, he gave the ideas a creation as literature as truly as Shakespeare created literature out of the originals of the "Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet."

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Speech Accepting Second Nomination. June 9, 1864

This response of Lincoln to those notifying him of his second nomination is marked by the greatest informality. His inherent sense of humility and his pioneerism cropped out on this occasion, but gave currency to the phrase about not swapping horses "while crossing the river." Lincoln's ideas and language were barometric; they followed the conditions of the occasion, up or down, according to the importance which he attached to the event.

Gentlemen: I can only say in response to the kind remarks of your chairman, as I suppose, that I am very grateful for the renewed confidence which has been accorded to me both by the convention and by the National League. I am not insensible at all to the personal compliment there is in this, and yet I do not allow myself to believe that any but a small portion of it is to be appropriated as a personal compliment. That really the convention and the Union League assembled with a higher view—that of taking care of the interests of the country for the present and the great future

—and that the part I am entitled to appropriate as a compliment is only that part which I may lay hold of as being the opinion of the convention and of the League, that I am not entirely unworthy to be intrusted with the place which I have occupied for the last three years. But I do not allow myself to suppose that either the convention or the League have concluded to decide that I am either the greatest or best man in America, but rather they have concluded that it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap.

Second Inaugural Address. March 4, 1865

The Second Inaugural marks the high water level of Lincoln's individuality in preparing a state paper. It is far removed from the conventionality usually employed on such an occasion. It embodies the feeling and language of religion with remarkable freedom. It illustrates brilliantly the character of his own mind and heart, and affords an example of his ability to trust and divine the soul of the people he addressed. His fine humility was united with great dignity and frankness. His love of direct thought was linked up with an unusual appreciation of good taste in speech. The Address is a perfect revelation of the man and his widened horizon as he emerged from the darker days of the rebellion. He had grown greater in the midst of tragic experiences. His poise had become even firmer, and his outlook spiritually refined. He had lent himself nobly to the perfection to be found in suffering.

Fellow Countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends,

is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto

the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Last Public Speech. April 11, 1865

Lincoln's last public utterance was prepared carefully from the point of view of ideas rather than from that of elegance. He felt that the approach of the complex problems of reconstruction, about which he knew there was much diversity and obstinacy of opinion, called for delicate and cautious discussion. Although he had suffered disappointment that his plan for Louisiana had not been followed by Congress, now divided between Radicals and Conservatives, Lincoln favored negro suffrage under the restrictions here indicated. He would follow the general principle laid down for Louisiana in the reconstruction of the other southern states. That principle was to make reconstruction a practical method for the readmission

of the erring states, unobstructed by metaphysical discussions about their constitutional status. He knew that the temper of Congress was tense and that a rupture would be easy. His attitude toward any problem was marked by reason and restraint. Hence, his suspicion of the wisdom of any "exclusive and inflexible plan" such as Congress was disposed to demand. Hence, also, his intimation of "some new announcement to the people," which his tragic death prevented. The entangled policy of Congress which followed has led many students of reconstruction to look with favor upon the wisdom of the plan which was taking form in Lincoln's mind, upon the principle that the element of charity could be united with firmness in the realization of a strong reunited nation.

Fellow Citizens: We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked. Their honors must not be parceled out with others. I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor for plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all belongs. The gallant navy stood ready, but was not in reach to take active part.

By these recent successes the reinauguration of the national authority—reconstruction—which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of war between independent nations, there is no organized organ for us to treat with—no one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to

the mode, manner, and measure of reconstruction. As a general rule, I abstain from reading the reports of attacks upon myself, wishing not to be provoked by that to which I cannot properly offer an answer. In spite of this precaution, however, it comes to my knowledge that I am much censured for some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new state government of Louisiana.

In this I have done just so much and no more than the public knows. In the annual message of December, 1863, and in the accompanying proclamation,[1] I presented a plan of reconstruction, as the phrase goes, which I promised, if adopted by any state, should be acceptable to and sustained by the executive government of the nation. I distinctly stated that this was not the only plan which might possibly be acceptable, and I also distinctly protested that the executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress from such states. This plan was in advance submitted to the then cabinet, and distinctly approved by every member of it. One of them suggested that I should then in that connection apply the Emancipation Proclamation to the theretofore excepted parts of Virginia and Louisiana; that I should drop the suggestion about apprenticeship for freed people, and that I should omit the protest against my own power in regard to the admission of members to Congress. But even he approved every part and parcel of the plan which has since been employed or touched by the action of Louisiana.

The new constitution of Louisiana, declaring emancipation for the whole state, practically applies the proclamation to the part previously excepted. It does not adopt apprenticeship for freed people, and it is

1 A proclamation defining the terms upon which persons engaged in rebellion might resume their allegiance to the United States. See Richardson's "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," VI: 213 f.

silent, as it could not well be otherwise, about the admission of members to Congress. So that, as it applies to Louisiana, every member of the cabinet fully approved the plan. The message went to Congress, and I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any professed emancipationist came to my knowledge until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it. From about July, 1862, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested [in] seeking a reconstruction of a state government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned, reached New Orleans, General Banks wrote me that he was confident that the people, with his military coöperation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan. I wrote to him and some of them to try it. They tried it, and the result is known. Such has been my only agency in getting up the Louisiana government.

As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated. But as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to public interest; but I have not yet been so convinced. I have been shown a letter on this subject, supposed to be an able one, in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixed upon the question whether the seceded states, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would perhaps add astonishment to his regret were he to learn that since I have found professed Union men endeavoring to make that question, I have purposely forborne any public expression upon it. As appears to me, that question has not been, nor yet is, a practically material one, and that any discussion of it, while it thus remains practically immaterial, could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as the basis

of a controversy, and good for nothing at all—a merely pernicious abstraction.

We all agree that the seceded states, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those states, is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these states have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these states and the Union, and each forever after innocently indulge his own opinion whether in doing the acts he brought the states from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it. The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all if it contained 50,000, or 30,000, or even 20,000, instead of only about 12,000 as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers.

Still, the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new state government? Some twelve thousand voters in the heretofore slave state of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the state, held elections, organized a state government, adopted a free-state constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the legislature to confer the

elective franchise upon the colored man. Their legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These twelve thousand persons are thus fully committed to the Union and to perpetual freedom in the state—committed to the very things, and nearly all the things, the nation wants—and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal.

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We, in effect, say to the white man: You are worthless or worse; we will neither help you, nor be helped by you. To the blacks, we say: This cup of liberty, which these, your old masters, hold to your lips, we will dash from you, and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined when, where, and how. If this course, discouraging and paralyzing both white and black, has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper, practical relations with the Union, I have so far been unable to perceive it. If, on the contrary, we recognize and sustain the new government of Louisiana, the converse of all this is made true. We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of twelve thousand to adhere to their work, and argue for it, and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feed it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success. The colored man, too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance, and energy, and daring to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it.

Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject one vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition it has been

argued that no more than three-fourths of those states which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned, while a ratification by three-fourths of all the states would be unquestioned and unquestionable. I repeat the question: Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new state government? What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other states. And yet so great peculiarities pertain to each state, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same state, and withal so new and unprecedented is the whole case, that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper.

LETTERS

Lincoln's Platform in 1836

Lincoln was successful in his race for the legislature in 1834. He ran again in 1836, and published in the *Sangamon Journal* the following announcement and platform. He was one of the "Long Nine" members from his county. He favored the program of internal improvements encouraged by this legislature, as well as the removal of the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. His legislative addresses published in Nicolay and Hay reveal the possession of a remarkably good style and vocabulary, together with ability to cope with his opponents in debate. This announcement, which seems hurriedly written, arrests attention for its endorsement of equal suffrage. Letter reprinted from Herndon, I: 166. See Richards, pp. 101-103.

New Salem, June 13, 1836.

To the Editor of the Journal: In your paper of last Saturday I see a communication, over the signature of "Many Voters," in which the candidates . . . announced . . . are called upon to "show their hands." Agreed. Here's mine.

I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently, I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).

If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me.

While acting as their representative, I shall be governed by their will on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is; and upon all others, I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests. Whether elected or

not, I go for distributing the proceeds of the sales of the public lands to the several states, to enable our state, in common with others, to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying the interest on it.

If alive on the first Monday in November, I shall vote for Hugh L. White for President.

Very respectfully,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to Colonel Robert Allen. June 21, 1836

Dear Colonel: I am told that during my absence last week you passed through this place, and stated publicly that you were in possession of a fact or facts which, if known to the public, would entirely destroy the prospects of N. W. Edwards and myself at the ensuing election; but that, through favor to us, you should forbear to divulge them. No one has needed favors more than I, and, generally, few have been less unwilling to accept them; but in this case favor to me would be injustice to the public, and therefore I must beg your pardon for declining it. That I once had the confidence of the people of Sangamon is sufficiently evident; and if I have since done anything, either by design or misadventure, which if known would subject me to a forfeiture of that confidence, he that knows of that thing, and conceals it, is a traitor to his country's interest.

I find myself wholly unable to form any conjecture of what fact or facts, real or supposed, you spoke; but my opinion of your veracity will not permit me for a moment to doubt that you at least believed what you said. I am flattered with the personal regard you manifested for me; but I do hope that, on more mature reflection, you will view the public interest as a paramount consideration, and therefore determine to let the worst come. I here assure you that the candid statement of facts on your part, however low it may sink

me, shall never break the tie of personal friendship between us. I wish an answer to this, and you are at liberty to publish both, if you choose.

LETTER TO MRS. O. H. BROWNING. SPRINGFIELD, APRIL 1, 1838

DEAR MADAM: Without apologizing for being egotistical, I shall make the history of so much of my life as has elapsed since I saw you the subject of this letter. And, by the way, I now discover that in order to give a full and intelligible account of the things I have done and suffered since I saw you, I shall necessarily have to relate some that happened before.

It was, then, in the autumn of 1836 that a married lady of my acquaintance, and who was a great friend of mine, being about to pay a visit to her father and other relatives residing in Kentucky, proposed to me that on her return she would bring a sister of hers with her on condition that I would engage to become her brother-in-law with all convenient dispatch. I, of course, accepted the proposal, for you know I could not have done otherwise had I really been averse to it; but privately, between you and me, I was most confoundedly well pleased with the project. I had seen the said sister some three years before, thought her intelligent and agreeable, and saw no good objection to plodding life through hand-in-hand with her. Time passed on, the lady took her journey, and in due time returned, sister in company, sure enough. This astonished me a little, for it appeared to me that her coming so readily showed that she was a trifle too willing, but on reflection it occurred to me that she might have been prevailed on by her married sister to come, without anything concerning me having been mentioned to her, and so I concluded that if no other objection presented itself, I would consent to waive this. All this occurred to me on hearing of her arrival in the neighborhood—for, be it remembered, I had not yet seen her, except

about three years previous, as above mentioned. In a few days we had an interview, and, although I had seen her before, she did not look as my imagination had pictured her. I knew she was over-size, but she now appeared a fair match for Falstaff. I knew she was called an "old maid," and I felt no doubt of the truth of at least half of the appellation, but now, when I beheld her, I could not for my life avoid thinking of my mother; and this, not from withered features,—for her skin was too full of fat to permit of its contracting into wrinkles—but from her want of teeth, weather-beaten appearance in general, and from a kind of notion that ran in my head that nothing could have commenced at the size of infancy and reached her present bulk in less than thirty-five or forty years; and, in short, I was not at all pleased with her. But what could I do? I had told her sister that I would take her for better or for worse, and I made a point of honor and conscience in all things to stick to my word, especially if others had been induced to act on it, which in this case I had no doubt they had, for I was now fairly convinced that no other man on earth would have her, and hence the conclusion that they were bent on holding me to my bargain. "Well," thought I, "I have said it, and, be the consequences what they may, it shall not be my fault if I fail to do it." At once I determined to consider her my wife, and this done, all my powers of discovery were put to work in search of perfections in her which might be fairly set off against her defects. I tried to imagine her handsome, which, but for her unfortunate corpulency, was actually true. Exclusive of this, no woman that I have ever seen has a finer face. I also tried to convince myself that the mind was much more to be valued than the person, and in this she was not inferior, as I could discover, to any with whom I had been acquainted.

Shortly after this, without attempting to come to any positive understanding with her, I set out for Vandalia, when and where you first saw me. During my stay

there I had letters from her which did not change my opinion of either her intellect or intention, but, on the contrary, confirmed it in both.

All this while, although I was fixed "firm as the surge-repelling rock" in my resolution, I found I was continually repenting the rashness which had led me to make it. Through life I had been in no bondage, either real or imaginary, from the thraldom of which I so much desired to be free. After my return home I saw nothing to change my opinion of her in any particular. She was the same, and so was I. I now spent my time in planning how I might get along in life after my contemplated change of circumstances should have taken place, and how I might procrastinate the evil day for a time, which I really dreaded as much, perhaps more, than an Irishman does the halter.

After all my sufferings upon this deeply interesting subject, here I am, wholly, unexpectedly, completely out of the "scrape," and I now want to know if you can guess how I got out of it—out, clear, in every sense of the term—no violation of word, honor, or conscience. I don't believe you can guess, and so I might as well tell you at once. As the lawyer says, it was done in the manner following, to wit: After I had delayed the matter as long as I thought I could in honor do (which, by the way, had brought me round into the last fall), I concluded I might as well bring it to a consummation without further delay, and so I mustered my resolution and made the proposal to her direct; but, shocking to relate, she answered, No. At first I supposed she did it through an affectation of modesty, which I thought but ill became her under the peculiar circumstances of the case, but on my renewal of the charge I found she repelled it with greater firmness than before. I tried it again and again, but with the same success, or rather with the same want of success.

I finally was forced to give it up, at which I very unexpectedly found myself mortified almost beyond

endurance. I was mortified, it seemed to me, in a hundred different ways. My vanity was deeply wounded by the reflection that I had so long been too stupid to discover her intentions, and at the same time never doubting that I understood them perfectly; and also that she, whom I had taught myself to believe nobody else would have, had actually rejected me with all my fancied greatness. And, to cap the whole, I then for the first time began to suspect that I was really a little in love with her. But let it all go! I'll try and outlive it. Others have been made fools of by the girls, but this can never in truth be said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance, made a fool of myself. I have now come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying, and for this reason—I can never be satisfied with any one who would be blockhead enough to have me.

When you receive this, write me a long yarn about something to amuse me. Give my respects to Mr. Browning.

From a Letter to William H. Herndon. Washington, January 8, 1848

Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846, as a Whig, where he formed a friendship with Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, afterward Vice-President of the Confederacy. Lincoln's congressional speeches show that he was "getting the hang of the House." They are published in Nicolay and Hay.

Dear William: Your letter of December 27th was received a day or two ago. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken, and promise to take in my little business there. As to speech-making, by way of getting the hang of the House, I made a little speech two or three days ago on a post-office question of no general interest. I find speaking here and elsewhere about the same thing. I was about as badly scared, and no worse, as I am when I speak in court. I expect to make one within a week or two, in which I hope to succeed well enough to wish you to see it.

It is very pleasant to learn from you that there are some who desire that I should be re-elected. I most heartily thank them for their partiality; and I can say, as Mr. Clay said of the annexation of Texas, that "personally I would not object" to a re-election, although I thought at the time, and still think, it would be quite as well for me to return to the law at the end of a single term. I made the declaration that I would not be a candidate again, more from a wish to deal fairly with others, to keep peace among our friends, and to keep the district from going to the enemy, than for any cause personal to myself; so that, if it should so happen that nobody else wishes to be elected, I could refuse the people the right of sending me again. But to enter myself as a competitor of others, or to authorize any one so to enter me, is what my word and honor forbid. . . .

From a Letter to William H. Herndon. Washington, June 22, 1848

This letter illustrates Lincoln's interest in young men in the making, and affords evidence of his natural shrewdness as a political manager. He had a habit of adapting his style to his purpose, ranging from the homespun to the ornate, as the occasion suggested. Lincoln was now thirty-nine years of age.

As to the young men. You must not wait to be brought forward by the older men. For instance, do you suppose that I should ever have got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men? You young men get together and form a "Rough and Ready Club," and have regular meetings and speeches. Take in everybody you can get. Harrison Grimsley, L. A. Enos, Lee Kimball, and C. W. Matheny will do to begin the thing; but as you go along gather up all the shrewd, wild boys about town, whether just of age or a little under age,—Chris. Logan, Reddick Ridgley, Lewis Zwizler, and hundreds such. Let every one play the part he can play best,—

some speak, some sing, and all "holler." Your meetings will be of evenings; the older men, and the women, will go to hear you; so that it will not only contribute to the election of "Old Zach," but will be an interesting pastime, and improving to the intellectual faculties of all engaged. Don't fail to do this.

Letter to John D. Johnston. January 2, 1851

Lincoln's two letters to his stepmother's son, who had come from Indiana with the Lincoln family, exhibit a Yankee sense of thrift, great common sense, and a spirit of kindliness in giving advice.

Dear Johnston: Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, "We can get along very well now"; but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now, this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get; and, to secure

you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will be soon out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But, if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and, if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eighty times eighty dollars to you.

Letter to John D. Johnston. Shelbyville, November 4, 1851

Dear Brother: When I came into Charleston day before yesterday, I learned that you are anxious to sell the land where you live and move to Missouri. I have been thinking of this ever since, and cannot but think such a notion is utterly foolish. What can you do in Missouri better than here? Is the land any richer? Can you there, any more than here, raise corn and wheat and oats without work? Will anybody there,

any more than here, do your work for you? If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work, you cannot get along anywhere. Squirming and crawling about from place to place can do no good. You have raised no crop this year; and what you really want is to sell the land, get the money, and spend it. Part with the land you have, and, my life upon it, you will never after own a spot big enough to bury you in. Half you will get for the land you will spend in moving to Missouri; and the other half you will eat, drink, and wear out, and no foot of land will be bought. Now, I feel it my duty to have no hand in such a piece of foolery. I feel that it is so even on your own account, and particularly on mother's account. The eastern forty acres I intend to keep for mother while she lives; if you will not cultivate it, it will rent for enough to support her—at least, it will rent for something. Her dower in the other two forties she can let you have, and no thanks to me. Now, do not misunderstand this letter; I do not write it in any unkindness. I write it in order, if possible, to get you to face the truth, which truth is, you are destitute because you have idled away all your time. Your thousand pretences for not getting along better are all nonsense; they deceive nobody but yourself. Go to work is the only cure for your case.

A word to mother. Chapman tells me he wants you to go and live with him. If I were you I would try it awhile. If you get tired of it (as I think you will not), you can return to your own home. Chapman feels very kindly to you, and I have no doubt he will make your situation very pleasant.

From a Letter to George Robertson. Springfield, August 15, 1855

Lincoln's Peoria speech marks his mastery of the fundamental national policy which enabled him to oppose Douglas's arguments in 1858. This letter to George Robertson, a jurist,

congressman and slavery advocate, living in Lexington, Kentucky, contains the thought afterwards developed in the famous first paragraph of the "House Divided" speech. This and the following letter to Joshua F. Speed, at one time governor of the Kansas territory, supplement the Peoria speech, and show that Lincoln had already reached the point of public and uncompromising hostility to the extension of slavery.

My dear Sir: You are not a friend of slavery in the abstract. In that speech you spoke of "the peaceful extinction of slavery" and used other expressions indicating your belief that the thing was, at some time, to have an end. Since then we have had thirty-six years of experience; and this experience has demonstrated, I think, that there is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us. The signal failure of Henry Clay and other good and great men, in 1849, to effect anything in favor of gradual emancipation in Kentucky, together with a thousand other signs, extinguished that hope utterly. On the question of liberty, as a principle, we are not what we have been. When we were the political slaves of King George, and wanted to be free, we called the maxim that "all men are created equal" a self-evident truth, but now when we have grown fat, and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedy to be masters that we call the same maxim "a self-evident lie." The Fourth of July has not quite dwindled away; it is still a great day—for burning fire-crackers!

That spirit which desired the peaceful extinction of slavery has itself become extinct with the occasion and the men of the Revolution. Under the impulse of that occasion, nearly half the states adopted systems of emancipation at once, and it is a significant fact that not a single state has done the like since. So far as peaceful, voluntary emancipation is concerned, the condition of the negro slave in America, scarcely less terrible to the contemplation of a free mind, is now as fixed and hopeless of change for the better as that of the lost souls of the finally impenitent. The Autocrat of all the Russias will resign his crown and proclaim

his subjects free republicans, sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves.

Our political problem now is, "Can we as a nation continue together *permanently—forever*—half slave and half free?" The problem is too mighty for me—may God in his mercy superintend the solution.

Your much obliged friend, and humble servant,

A. Lincoln.

From a Letter to Joshua F. Speed. Springfield, August 24, 1855

Dear Speed: You know what a poor correspondent I am. Ever since I received your very agreeable letter of the 22d of May I have been intending to write you an answer to it. You suggest that in political action now, you and I would differ. I suppose we would; not quite so much, however, as you may think. You know I dislike slavery, and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. So far there is no cause of difference. But you say that sooner than yield your legal right to the slave, especially at the bidding of those who are not themselves interested, you would see the Union dissolved. I am not aware that any one is bidding you yield that right; very certainly I am not. I leave that matter entirely to yourself. I also acknowledge your rights and my obligations under the Constitution in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. In 1841, you and I had together a tedious low-water trip on a steamboat, from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio, there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continued torment to me, and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing

which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union. I do oppose the extension of slavery, because my judgment and feeling so prompt me, and I am under no obligations to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must. You say if you were President, you would send an army and hang the leaders of the Missouri outrages upon the Kansas elections; still, if Kansas fairly votes herself a slave state she must be admitted, or the Union must be dissolved. But how if she votes herself a slave state unfairly; that is, by the very means for which you say you would hang men? Must she still be admitted, or the Union dissolved? That will be the phase of the question when it first becomes a practical one. In your assumption that there may be a fair decision of the slavery question in Kansas, I plainly see that you and I would differ about the Nebraska law. I look upon that enactment, not as a law, but as a violence from the beginning. It was conceived in violence, is maintained in violence, and is being executed in violence. I say it was conceived in violence, because the destruction of the Missouri Compromise, under the circumstances, was nothing less than violence. It was passed in violence, because it could not have passed at all but for the votes of many members in violence of the known will of their constituents. It is maintained in violence, because the elections since clearly demand its repeal, and the demand is openly disregarded.

You say men ought to be hung for the way they are executing the law; I say that the way it is being executed is quite as good as any of its antecedents. It is being executed in the precise way which was intended from the first, else why does no Nebraska man express astonishment or condemnation? Poor Reeder is the only public man who has been silly enough to believe

that anything like fairness was ever intended, and he has been bravely undeceived.

That Kansas will form a slave constitution, and with it will ask to be admitted into the Union, I take to be already a settled question, and so settled by the very means you so pointedly condemn. By every principle of law ever held by any court North or South, every negro taken to Kansas is free; yet in utter disregard of this,—in the spirit of violence merely,—that beautiful legislature gravely passes a law to hang any man who shall venture to inform a negro of his legal rights. This is the subject and real object of the law. If, like Haman, they should hang upon the gallows of their own building, I shall not be among the mourners for their fate. In my humble sphere, I shall advocate the restoration of the Missouri Compromise so long as Kansas remains a territory, and when, by all these foul means, it seeks to come into the Union as a slave state, I shall oppose it. I am very loath in any case to withhold my assent to the enjoyment of property acquired or located in good faith; but I do not admit that good faith in taking a negro to Kansas to be held in slavery is a probability with any man. Any man who has sense enough to be the controller of his own property has too much sense to misunderstand the outrageous character of the whole Nebraska business. But I digress. In my opposition to the admission of Kansas, I shall have some company, but we may be beaten. If we are, I shall not, on that account, attempt to dissolve the Union. I think it probable, however, we shall be beaten. Standing as a unit among yourselves, you can, directly and indirectly, bribe enough of our men to carry the day, as you could on the open proposition to establish a monarchy. Get hold of some man in the North whose position and ability are such that he can make the support of your measure, whatever it may be, a Democratic-party necessity, and the thing is done. Apropos of this, let me tell you an anecdote. Douglas introduced the Nebraska bill in Janu-

ary. In February afterward, there was a called session of the Illinois legislature. Of the one hundred members composing the two branches of that body, about seventy were Democrats. These latter held a caucus, in which the Nebraska bill was talked of, if not formally discussed. It was thereby discovered that just three, and no more, were in favor of the measure. In a day or two Douglas's orders came on to have resolutions passed approving the bill; and they were passed by large majorities! ! ! The truth of this is vouched for by a bolting Democratic member.

Letter to J. M. Brockman. September 25, 1860

Dear Sir: Yours of the 24th, asking "the best mode of obtaining a thorough knowledge of the law," is received. The mode is very simple, though laborious and tedious. It is only to get the books and read and study them carefully. Begin with Blackstone's "Commentaries," and after reading it carefully through, say twice, take up Chitty's "Pleadings," Greenleaf's "Evidence," and Story's "Equity," etc., in succession. Work, work, work, is the main thing.

Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to Colonel Ellsworth's Parents. Washington, May 25, 1861

Colonel E. E. Ellsworth (1837-1861) had read law in Lincoln's office, had been a leader of Zouaves during the Presidential campaign of 1860, and had accompanied the inaugural party to Washington. He commanded the Federal troops which entered Alexandria in May, and was shot by a hotel keeper there, over whose house floated a Confederate flag, which the brave young Colonel tore down with his own hands. It is interesting to compare this letter of condolence with Lincoln's similar letters to Miss Fanny McCullough, December 23, 1863, and the letter to Mrs. Bixby, November 21, 1864.

My dear Sir and Madam: In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction is scarcely less than your

own. So much of promised usefulness to one's country, and of bright hopes for one's self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed as in his fall. In size, in years, and in youthful appearance a boy only, his power to command men was surpassingly great. This power, combined with a fine intellect, an indomitable energy, and a taste altogether military, constituted in him, as seemed to me, the best natural talent in that department I ever knew.

And yet he was singularly modest and deferential in social intercourse. My acquaintance with him began less than two years ago; yet through the latter half of the intervening period it was as intimate as the disparity of our ages and my engrossing engagements would permit. To me he appeared to have no indulgences or pastimes; and I never heard him utter a profane or an intemperate word. What was conclusive of his good heart, he never forgot his parents. The honors he labored for so laudably, and for which in the sad end he so gallantly gave his life, he meant for them no less than for himself.

In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured to address you this tribute to the memory of my young friend and your brave and early fallen child.

May God give you that consolation which is beyond all earthly power.

Sincerely your friend in a common affliction,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to Horace Greeley. Washington, August 22, 1862

On August 19, Horace Greeley printed in the *New York Tribune* an editorial under the heading, "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," in which he entreated the President "to render hearty and unequivocal obedience to the laws of the land!" A similar editorial was published on the following day. Greeley, radical and erratic, felt with those of his class that emancipation preceded the preservation of the Union in importance, and he intimated that Lincoln was

under the influence of the slave power. Lincoln's coolly rational reply was a masterpiece of direct statement of purpose and policy, as condensed as it was inclusive.

DEAR SIR: I have just read yours of the 19th instant, addressed to myself through the *New York Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not now and here controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it, in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe that what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free. Yours,

A. LINCOLN.

FROM A LETTER TO GENERAL G. B. MCCLELLAN. WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 3, 1862

The President and General McClellan held different views with reference to the advance upon Richmond. The general desired to move his troops by water to Fort Monroe and thence up the peninsula to Richmond; Lincoln believed the army should march overland, but yielded the point. The letter which follows illustrates Lincoln's way of reasoning both sides of a question to find on which side lay the balance of probabilities. McClellan's continued delay led the President to remark later that the Army of the Potomac served only as McClellan's bodyguard, and that if McClellan did not intend to use the army, he should like to borrow it for a while.

MY DEAR SIR: You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the Army of the Potomac —yours to be down the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana and across land to the terminus of the railroad on the York River; mine to move directly to a point on the railroad southwest of Manassas.

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions, I shall gladly yield my plan to yours.

First. Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of time and money than mine?

Second. Wherein is victory more certain by your plan than mine?

Third. Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?

Fourth. In fact, would it not be less valuable in this, that it would break no great line of the enemy's communications, while mine would?

Fifth. In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?

FROM A LETTER TO CUTHBERT BULLITT. JULY 28, 1862

This is a discussion by the President of the lukewarm attitude of the professed Union men in Louisiana who complained of the presence of Federal restrictions in that State. These men were merely complaining of the inconvenience they felt. They maintained that they were in the majority, yet the President shows clearly that, admitting this, it was inconceivable why they were so inactive in behalf of the Union. The pith of his letter, which follows, presents his view of the best method of finding relief from the troubles of which they complained. The close of the letter suggests the temper of the close of the great Second Inaugural, of 1865.

Now, I think the true remedy is very different from that suggested by Mr. Durant. It does not lie in rounding the rough angles of the war, but in removing the necessity for the war. The people of Louisiana who wish protection to person and property, have but to reach forth their hands and take it. Let them in good faith reinaugurate the national authority, and set up a State government conforming thereto under the Constitution. They know how to do it, and can have the protection of the army while doing it. The army will be withdrawn as soon as such government can dispense with its presence, and the people of the State can then, upon the old constitutional terms, govern themselves to their own liking. This is very simple and easy.

If they will not do this, if they prefer to hazard all for the sake of destroying the government, it is for them to consider whether it is probable that I will surrender the government to save them from losing all. If they decline what I suggest, you will scarcely need to ask what I will do.

What would you do in my position? Would you drop the war where it is, or would you prosecute it in future with elder-stalk squirts charged with rose-water? Would you deal lighter blows rather than heavier ones? Would you give up the contest, leaving any available means untried?

I am in no boastful mood. I shall not do more than I can; but I shall do all I can to save the government, which is my sworn duty as well as my personal inclination. I shall do nothing in malice. What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing.

Letter to Miss Fanny McCullough. December 23, 1862

Lincoln's letters of condolence exhibit heartfelt sympathy in a language equally frank and refined. Similar examples are the letters to Colonel Ellsworth's parents and to Mrs. Bixby.

Dear Fanny: It is with deep regret that I learn of the death of your kind and brave father, and especially that it is affecting your young heart beyond what is common in such cases. In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all, and to the young it comes with bittered agony because it takes them unawares. The older have learned ever to expect it. I am anxious to afford some alleviation of your present distress. Perfect relief is not possible except with time. You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say, and you need only to believe it to feel better at once. The memory of your dear father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad, sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer and holier sort than you have known before.

Please present my kind regards to your afflicted mother. Your sincere friend,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to the Workingmen of Manchester. Washington, January 19, 1863

President Lincoln's blockade of the southern ports at the outset of the Civil War was followed by a very severe cotton famine in England, which threw out of employment thousands

of operatives in the factories of Lancashire. Relief societies in England raised nearly $15,000,000 for their assistance. At one time about 250,000 persons were the recipients of benefit. Had the workingmen brought pressure upon their government, "it must have turned the scale irresistibly; yet the workingmen chose to endure a long period of terrible privation rather than demand an intervention which must have given a renewed lease of life to the institution of slavery. The whole episode redounds to the national honor of England and most of all to that of the British workingman." On New Year's eve six thousand workmen held a meeting in Manchester to celebrate President Lincoln's emancipation of the American slaves, and sent resolutions of approval. John Bright, friend of America, wrote Charles Sumner that he thought that "in every town in the kingdom, a public meeting would go by an overwhelming majority in favor of President Lincoln and the North." This year, 1863, Henry Ward Beecher made many addresses to the workingmen of England and Scotland in explanation of the issues between the North and the South. These remarkable addresses are interesting reading and may be found in most public libraries. Lincoln's reply to the Manchester workingmen is so elevated in thought and language and so appreciative of the attitude of those to whom he wrote, that it sounds like a prophecy of the spiritual alliance in reality existing between the two great English-speaking nations in behalf of the high ideals for which the better sentiment of both stand.

To the Workingmen of Manchester: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the address and resolutions which you sent me on the eve of the new year. When I came, on the 4th of March, 1861, through a free and constitutional election to preside in the government of the United States, the country was found at the verge of civil war. Whatever might have been the cause, or whosesoever the fault, one duty, paramount to all others, was before me, namely, to maintain and preserve at once the Constitution and the integrity of the federal republic. A conscientious purpose to perform this duty is the key to all the measures of administration which have been and to all which will hereafter be pursued. Under our frame of government and my official oath, I could not depart from this purpose if I would. It is not always in the power of governments to enlarge or restrict the scope

of moral results which follow the policies that they may deem it necessary for the public safety from time to time to adopt.

I have understood well that the duty of self-preservation rests solely with the American people; but I have at the same time been aware that favor or disfavor of foreign nations might have a material influence in enlarging or prolonging the struggle with disloyal men in which the country is engaged. A fair examination of history has served to authorize a belief that the past actions and influences of the United States were generally regarded as having been beneficial toward mankind. I have, therefore, reckoned upon the forbearance of nations. Circumstances—to some of which you kindly allude—induce me especially to expect that if justice and good faith should be practiced by the United States, they would encounter no hostile influence on the part of Great Britain. It is now a pleasant duty to acknowledge the demonstration you have given of your desire that a spirit of amity and peace toward this country may prevail in the councils of your Queen, who is respected and esteemed in your own country only more than she is by the kindred nation which has its home on this side of the Atlantic.

I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the workingmen at Manchester, and in all Europe, are called to endure in this crisis. It has been often and studiously represented that the attempt to overthrow this government, which was built upon the foundation of human rights, and to substitute for it one which should rest exclusively on the basis of human slavery, was likely to obtain the favor of Europe. Through the action of our disloyal citizens, the workingmen of Europe have been subjected to severe trials, for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that attempt. Under the circumstances, I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been sur-

passed in any age or in any country. It is indeed an energetic and reinspiring assurance of the inherent power of truth, and of the ultimate and universal triumph of justice, humanity, and freedom. I do not doubt that the sentiments you have expressed will be sustained by your great nation; and, on the other hand, I have no hesitation in assuring you that they will excite admiration, esteem, and the most reciprocal feelings of friendship among the American people. I hail this interchange of sentiment, therefore, as an augury that whatever else may happen, whatever misfortunes may befall your country or my own, the peace and friendship which now exist between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them, perpetual. ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

LETTER TO GENERAL HOOKER. WASHINGTON, JANUARY 26, 1863

Lincoln's search for a successful general to head the eastern armies had met with ill success. In appointing Hooker to the chief command, the President disregarded formality and counseled him freely, yet very succinctly, upon his defects and his virtues as a general, and revealed to him the unfavorable spirit in the army for which he must assume his share of personal responsibility. In a single paragraph, the President epitomized the military situation confronting the appointee, the qualities essential to army leadership, and the great need of the nation at the hour—freedom from rashness, energy, and victories. In his "History of the Civil War" (1917), pp. 207-211, Rhodes gives a brief and clear statement of Lincoln's problem in reference to a general for the Army of the Potomac, together with a historic estimate of the men immediately available for the place when Hooker received the appointment.

GENERAL: I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier,

which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to General Grant. Washington, July 13, 1863

My dear General: I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country. I wish to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of

Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did—march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong. Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln.

Letter to J. C. Conkling. Washington, August 26, 1863

James C. Conkling was an able lawyer in Springfield and a good friend of Lincoln's. He was a presidential elector in 1860 and again in 1864. Lincoln's letter of August 26, soon after the success of Meade at Gettysburg, is in many respects an ideal summary of the course of the war and the policy of the administration toward the complex problems of public opinion and the slavery issue. As an argument in justification of the President's attitude to these problems and the course he had been pursuing, the letter is a model that will long engage the interest of students of literature as well as history. The letter states the essential issues about which men of divergent shades of opinion were then thinking, and answers them with energy and directness. It moves easily and confidently from point to point with a perfect command of facts and their interpretation. The argument has the advantage of being free from formality. Its influence in composing minds disturbed by the policy of emancipation was very great.

My dear Sir: Your letter inviting me to attend a mass meeting of Unconditional Union men, to be held at the capital of Illinois on the third day of September, has been received. It would be very agreeable to me to thus meet my old friends at my own home, but I cannot just now be absent from here so long as a visit there would require.

The meeting is to be of all those who maintain unconditional devotion to the Union; and I am sure my old political friends will thank me for tendering, as I do, the nation's gratitude to those and other noble men whom no partisan malice or partisan hope can make false to the nation's life.

There are those who are dissatisfied with me. To such I would say: You desire peace, and you blame me that we do not have it. But how can we attain it? There are but three conceivable ways. First, to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. This I am trying to do. Are you for it? If you are, so far we are agreed. If you are not for it, a second way is to give up the Union. I am against this. Are you for it? If you are, you should say so plainly. If you are not for force, nor yet for dissolution, there only remains some imaginable compromise. I do not believe any compromise embracing the maintenance of the Union is now possible. All I learn leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the rebellion is its military, its army. That army dominates all the country and all the people within its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present, because such man or men have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them.

To illustrate: Suppose refugees from the South and peace men of the North get together in convention, and frame and proclaim a compromise embracing a restoration of the Union. In what way can that compromise be used to keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania? Meade's army can keep Lee's out of Pennsylvania, and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence. But no paper compromise, to which the controllers of Lee's army are not agreed, can at all affect that army. In an effort at such compromise we should waste time which the enemy would improve to our disadvantage; and that would be all. A compro-

mise, to be effective, must be made either with those who control the rebel army, or with the people first liberated from the domination of that army by the success of our own army. Now, allow me to assure you that no word or intimation from that rebel army, or from any of the men controlling it, in relation to any peace compromise, has ever come to my knowledge or belief. All charges and insinuations to the contrary are deceptive and groundless. And I promise you that if any such proposition shall hereafter come, it shall not be rejected and kept a secret from you. I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service—the United States Constitution—and that, as such, I am responsible to them.

But to be plain. You are dissatisfied with me about the negro. Quite likely there is a difference of opinion between you and myself upon that subject. I certainly wish that all men could be free, while I suppose you do not. Yet I have neither adopted nor proposed any measure which is not consistent with even your views, provided you are for the Union. I suggested compensated emancipation, to which you replied you wished not to be taxed to buy negroes. But I had not asked you to be taxed to buy negroes, except in such way as to save you from greater taxation to save the Union exclusively by other means.

You dislike the Emancipation Proclamation, and perhaps would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional. I think differently. I think the Constitution invests its commander in chief with the law of war in time of war. The most that can be said—if so much—is that slaves are property. Is there—has there ever been—any question that, by the law of war, property, both of enemies and friends, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever taking it helps us or hurts the enemy? Armies the world over destroy enemies' property when they cannot use it, and even destroy their own to keep it from the enemy.

Civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves or hurt the enemy, except a few things regarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes and noncombatants, male and female.

But the proclamation, as law, either is valid or is not valid. If it is not valid, it needs no retraction. If it is valid, it cannot be retracted any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favorably for the Union. Why better after the retraction than before the issue? There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the rebellion before the proclamation issued, the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming, unless averted by those in revolt returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favorably for us since the issue of the proclamation as before. I know, as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field who have given us our most important successes, believe the emancipation policy and the use of colored troops constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion, and that at least one of these important successes could not have been achieved when it was, but for the aid of black soldiers. Among the commanders holding these views are some who have never had any affinity with what is called Abolitionism or with Republican party politics, but who hold them purely as military opinions. I submit these opinions as being entitled to some weight against the objections often urged, that emancipation and arming the blacks are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted as such in good faith.

You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered

all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time then for you to declare you will not fight to free negroes.

I thought that in your struggles for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes could be got to do as soldiers leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept.

The signs look better. The Father of Waters agains goes unvexed to the sea. Thanks to the great Northwest for it. Nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up they met New England, Empire, Keystone, and Jersey hewing their way right and left. The sunny South, too, in more colors than one, also lent a hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down in black and white. The job was a great national one, and let none be banned who bore an honorable part in it. And while those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg, and on many fields of lesser note. Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks. Thanks to all—for the great Republic—for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future —thanks to all.

Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it

will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among freemen there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation, while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they strove to hinder it.

Still, let us not be over-sanguine of a speedy, final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in His own good time, will give us the rightful result.

Yours very truly,
A. Lincoln.

Letter to A. G. Hodges, of Kentucky.
Washington, April 4, 1864

Colonel Albert Hodges, at one time state printer of Kentucky, and editor of *The Commonwealth*, a Union paper of Frankfort, Ky., when this letter was written, had protested against the arming of negroes to assist in putting down the rebellion. Lincoln's letter is an argument in defence of his decision to use negro soldiers. It is interesting to compare, in motive and method, this letter with those written to Greeley and Conkling.

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath that I took, that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in

using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract feeling and judgment on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government—that nation—of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution, all together. When, early in the war, General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March and May and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the border States to favour compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come, unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judg-

ment, driven to the alternation of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or laying strong hand upon the coloured element. I chose the latter. In choosing it, I hoped for greater gain than loss; but of this I was not entirely confident. More than a year of trial now shows no loss by it in our foreign relations, none in our home popular sentiment, none in our white military force—no loss by it anyhow or anywhere. On the contrary, it shows a gain of quite one hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen, and labourers. These are palpable facts, about which, as facts, there can be no cavilling. We have the men, and we could not have had them without the measure.

And now let any Union man who complains of the measure, test himself by writing down in one line that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms; and in the next, that he is for taking these hundred and thirty thousand men from the Union side, and placing them where they would be but for the measure he condemns. If he cannot face his case so stated, it is only because he cannot face the truth.

I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation. In telling this tale, I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Letter to Mrs. Bixby. Washington, November 21, 1864

The most enduring prose with which Lincoln enriched English literature would include the letter to Mrs. Bixby, the Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural, representing respectively the three divisions of his written words: the letter, the public address, and the state-paper. Following closely after these, it would be necessary to consider the letter to Conkling and the First Inaugural. It would be difficult to exclude the "literary gem" to be found in his letter to the king of Siam or his address to the workingmen of Manchester, England. Passages from his other writings, illustrating the excellence of his prose, are not difficult to discover. The letter of four sentences to Mrs. Bixby combines as perfect thought, feeling, and phrasing as, perhaps, may be found in the epistolary literature of any language.

Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

Abraham Lincoln.

The following Letter from Lincoln has, as far as the Editor can ascertain, not before been brought into print.

The Literary Review—Dec. 24, 1921.

An autograph letter in the careful handwriting and precise phraseology of Abraham Lincoln, written when he was a member of Congress and believed to be unpublished, has recently come into the possession of Thomas F. Madigan, dealer in autographs, 8 West Forty-seventh Street. The letter in its personal attitude and clearness of statement is so characteristic of its great author that we are sure that it will be of interest to the readers of these columns. Mr. Madigan has kindly furnished us with a copy and given permission to print in full:

Washington,
Feb. 13, 1848.

DEAR HEWETT: Your Whig representative from Mississippi, P. W. Tompkins, has just shown me a letter of yours to him. I am jealous because you did not write to me. Perhaps you have forgotten me. Don't you remember a long black fellow who rode on horseback with you from Tremont to Springfield nearly ten years ago, swimming your horses over the Mackanaw on the trip? Well, I am that same old fellow yet.

I was once of your opinion, expressed in your letter, that presidential electors should be dispensed with; but a more thorough knowledge of the causes that first introduced them has made me doubt. These causes were briefly these. The Convention that framed the Constitution had this difficulty: the small states wished to so form the new Government as that they might be equal to the large ones regardless of the inequality of population; the large ones insisted on equality in proportion to population. They compromised it by basing the House of Representatives on *population* and the Senate on *States* regardless of population; and the executive on both principles, by electors in each state equal in number to her senators *and* representatives.

Now, throw away the machinery of electors and the compromise is broken up and the whole yielded to the principle of the large States. There is one thing more. In the slave states you have representatives, and consequently, electors, partly upon the basis of your black population, which would be swept away by the change you seem to think desirable. Have you ever reflected on these things?

But to come to the main point. I wish you to know that I have made a speech in Congress and that I want you to be *enlightened* by reading it; to further which object I send you a copy of the speech by this mail.

For old acquaintance sake, if for nothing else, be sure to write me on receiving this. I was very near forgetting to tell you that on my being introduced to Genl. Quitman and telling him I was from Springfield, Illinois, he at once remarked "Then you are acquainted with my valued friend Hewett of Natchez," and on being assured I was, he said just such things about you as I like to hear said about my own valued friends.

Yours as ever,

A. Lincoln.

Josephus Hewett, Esq.

LINCOLN'S VERSE

The poetic vein in Abraham Lincoln cropped out in several compositions in rhyme that have survived from his boyhood. When, after the assassination, Herndon set about to gather materials for his Life of Lincoln, he visited the old home of Thomas Lincoln in Indiana, near Gentryville, and obtained, he says, from Mrs. Josiah Crawford, a neighbor of the Lincolns, some manuscripts of "Abe's early literary efforts." The most pretentious of this "doggerel" is "Adam and Eve's Wedding Song," which Herndon says was composed by Abe in honor of the marriage of his sister, Sarah Lincoln, to Aaron Grigsby, of Gentryville, in 1826. The "song" consists of eight stanzas, as follows:

When Adam was created
  He dwelt in Eden's shade,
As Moses has recorded,
  And soon a bride was made.

Ten thousand times ten thousand
  Of creatures swarmed around
Before a bride was formed,
  And yet no mate was found.

The Lord then was not willing
  That man should be alone,
But caused a sleep upon him,
  And from him took a bone.

And closed the flesh instead thereof,
  And then he took the same
And of it made a woman,
  And brought her to the man.

Then Adam he rejoiced
To see his loving bride
A part of his own body,
The product of his side.

The woman was not taken
From Adam's feet we see,
So he must not abuse her,
The meaning seems to be.

The woman was not taken
From Adam's head, we know,
To show she must not rule him—
'Tis evidently so.

The woman she was taken
From under Adam's arm,
So she must be protected
From injuries and harm.

Very recently Lincoln's authorship of this "song" has been challenged. In July, 1918, through the instrumentality of Mr. Henry B. Rankin, of Springfield, Ill., the writer was put into communication with Hon. Wiley E. Jones, attorney-general of the State of Arizona, from whom he obtained the original manuscript of "The Song of Creation," written August 14, 1818, by William H. Bozarth, of Grayson county, Kentucky, for Miss Ally Grieves of the same locality. Mr. Jones has kindly loaned this original and much-faded manuscript to the writer. It is the inheritance of Mrs. Phoebe L. Jones, of Phoenix, Arizona, a granddaughter of William H. Bozarth, who has furnished in an affidavit which accompanies the manuscript of the "Song," a history of her family and the circumstances attending the writing of the song by her grandfather. A literal transcription of "The Song of Creation" is as follows:

When adam was created he dwelt in edons shad
as moses has recorded and same a bride was made

ten thousand times ten thousand Creatures swarmd
around
before a bride was formed and yet no mate was found

he had no conversation but seamed as yet alone
till to his admiration he found he had lost a bone
great was his Elevation when first he saw his bride
great was his exaltation to see her by his side

he spake as in a rapture as from whence you came
as from my left side atracted and woman is your name
then adam he rejoiced to see his loving bride
apart of his own body the produce of his side

this woman was not taken from adams feet we see
so we must not abuse her the meaning seems to bee
this woman was not taken from adams head we know
to show she must not rule him its evidently so

this woman was Extracted from under adams arm
so she must be protected from injury and harm
this woman was extracted from near to adams heart
by which we are directed that they shall never part

here is Council for the bride groom & likewise for the
b[ride]
let not this sacred volum be ever laid aside
the book thats Cald the bible be shore you dont neglect
in thought words and action it does you boath direct

the bride she is Commanded her husband to obey
in every thing that is lawful until her dying day
the bridegroom is Commanded that is to love his bride
live as becomes a christian and for his house provide

the bride she is Commanded to obey her husbands
w[ill]
in every thing thats lawful his duty to fulfil
avoiding all offences throughout the human life
these are the sollom duties of every man and wife

On the back of the sheet containing this song is the following inscription, with the signature of the author and the date of composition:

The Song of Creation wrote by
Wm H Bozarth August 14th 1818
For Miss Ally Grieves
Grayson County
Kentucky 1818
William H. Bozarth

It is apparent, of course, that the greater part of the "Adam and Eve's Wedding Song," ascribed to Lincoln, duplicates almost literally a good part of Bozarth's "Song of Creation," written eight years earlier. It is evident that the Bozarth stanzas are the original of the lines ascribed to Lincoln. Lincoln's verses are assigned to the year 1826, when he would be seventeen years of age; Bozarth (1796-1825) wrote his lines in 1818, and his death occurred the year before the Lincoln verses are alleged to have been written.

The writer of this volume has not had an opportunity to examine the manuscript from which Herndon reproduced the Lincoln "Song," and is therefore limited to a comparison of Herndon's version with the original manuscript of the Bozarth verses. This comparison, in itself, leads to the conclusion that young Abe must have had access to Bozarth's lines, possibly through a Kentucky newspaper taken by some one in his Indiana neighborhood. Herndon (page 57) speaks of "the only newspaper—sent from Louisville," taken by the keeper of the store at Gentryville, one Jones, "at whose place of business gathered Abe, Dennis Hanks, Baldwin, the blacksmith, and other kindred spirits to discuss such topics as are the exclusive property of the store no longer." If Herndon's version was furnished by Abe at his sister's marriage, it seems probable that he selected for his purpose certain of the Bozarth lines and added a stanza of his own making. In this case, he improved the stanzas selected by

a few verbal changes. Herndon, as well as other of Lincoln's biographers, creates the impression that, in the neighborhood of Gentryville, young Abe was the cleverest of all in the art of writing. Herndon speaks of a boyhood composition on the "American Government," which the local Judge John Pitcher, from whom Abe borrowed books, read and declared "the world couldn't beat it;" and of another of Abe's articles on "Temperance," which was "furnished to an Ohio newspaper for publication." Herndon shows that Lincoln, as a boy, was accustomed to write rhymes, satiric and otherwise; and Arnold (page 24) quotes Dennis Hanks as saying of Abe, "He was always reading, writing, cyphering, writing poetry."

In the *Century Magazine* for April, 1894, John G. Nicolay contributed a valuable article on "Lincoln's Literary Experiments." He reproduced two of Lincoln's most serious attempts at verse writing, compositions written after he had become a lawyer and politician at Springfield. Lincoln sent these two poems to his "Friend Johnson," whom Mr. Nicolay identifies no further. One of the poems was included in a letter Lincoln wrote to Johnson, April 18, 1846, in which he tells the circumstances of its composition: "In the fall of 1844, thinking I might aid some to carry the State of Indiana for Mr. Clay, I went into the neighborhood in that State in which I was raised, where my mother and only sister were buried, and from which I had been absent about fifteen years.

"That part of the country is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot of the earth; but still, seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry, though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question. When I got to writing, the change of subject divided the thing into four little divisions or cantos, the first only of which I send you now, and may send the others hereafter." The verses follow:

My childhood's home I see again,
And sadden with the view;
And still, as memory crowds my brain,
There's pleasure in it too.

O Memory! thou midway world
'Twixt earth and paradise,
Where things decayed and loved ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise,

And, freed from all that's earthly vile,
Seem hallowed, pure and bright,
Like scenes in some enchanted isle
All bathed in liquid light.

As dusky mountains please the eye
When twilight chases day;
As bugle-notes that, passing by,
In distance die away;

As leaving some grand waterfall,
We, lingering, list its roar—
So memory will hallow all
We've known but know no more.

Near twenty years have passed away
Since here I bid farewell
To woods and fields, and scenes of play,
And playmates loved so well.

Where many were, but few remain
Of old familiar things;
But seeing them to mind again
The lost and absent brings.

The friends I left that parting day,
How changed, as time has sped!
Young childhood grown, strong manhood gray;
And half of all are dead.

I hear the loved survivors tell
How naught but death could save,

Till every sound appears a knell,
And every spot a grave.

I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms,
And feel (companion of the dead)
I'm living in the tombs.

On September 6, 1846, Lincoln enclosed to "Friend Johnson" another of the cantos he had promised, this one on a certain Matthew Gentry, "son of the rich man of a very poor neighborhood," who had been a schoolmate of Lincoln's in Indiana. This boy, three years Lincoln's senior, at nineteen, had become "furiously mad," and on Lincoln's visit in Indiana in 1844, he found him "still lingering in this wretched condition." Lincoln made him the subject of this second canto.

But here's an object more of dread
Than aught the grave contains—
A human form with reason fled,
While wretched life remains.

When terror spread, and neighbors ran
Your dangerous strength to bind,
And soon, a howling, crazy man,
Your limbs were fast confined;

How then you strove and shrieked aloud,
Your bones and sinews bared;
And fiendish on the gazing crowd
With burning eyeballs glared;

And begged and swore, and wept and prayed,
With maniac laughter joined;
How fearful were these signs displayed
By pangs that killed the mind!

And when at length the drear and long
Time soothed by fiercer woes,

How plaintively thy mournful song
Upon the still night rose!

I've heard it oft as if I dreamed.
Far distant, sweet and lone,
The funeral dirge it ever seemed
Of reason dead and gone.

To drink its strains I've stole away,
All stealthily and still,
Ere yet the rising god of day
Had streaked the eastern hill.

Air held her breath; trees with the spell
Seemed sorrowing angels round,
Whose swelling tears in dewdrops fell
Upon the listening ground.

But this is past, and naught remains
That raised thee over the brute:
Thy piercing shrieks and soothing strains
Are like, forever mute.

Now fare thee well! More thou the cause
Than subject now of woe.
All mental pangs by time's kind laws
Hast lost the power to know.

O death! thou awe-inspiring prince
That keepst the world in fear,
Why dost thou tear more blest ones hence,
And leave him lingering here?

Mr. Nicolay's comment on these two poems of Lincoln's is that, although "they call for no special admiration on account of intrinsic merit, they are of exceeding interest as stepping-stones to the attainment of that literary style and power which, in his later speeches and writings, have elicited the enthusiasm of the best scholars and critics."

MISCELLANIES

Note for Law Lecture. Undated. Written about July 1, 1850

In the following note, Lincoln condenses the essential ethics of the legal profession. The note is autobiographical in respect to his own practice. It is now conceded that Lincoln stood among the first men of the profession in Illinois. Mr. Richards shows conclusively that Lincoln was concerned in one hundred and seventy-five cases before the Illinois Supreme Court, and in two cases before the Supreme Court of the United States. This is not to mention his practice in the lower courts. Lincoln's largest fee, Herndon tells us (I: 351-353), was $5,000, for services as attorney for the Illinois Central railroad, of which George B. McClellan was superintendent. Several young men read law in Lincoln and Herndon's office. Of these, Mr. Henry B. Rankin, now eighty-two years of age, and the author of an important volume of "Recollections," was one. Mr. Rankin still lives in Springfield. Lincoln's advice to prospective readers of the law will be found in his letters to Isham Reavis, November 5, 1855; to James T. Thornton, December, 1858; and to J. M. Brockman, September 25, 1860, written after his nomination for the Presidency. The letter to J. M. Brockman is included in the Appendix.

I am not an accomplished lawyer. I find quite as much material for a lecture in those points wherein I have failed, as in those wherein I have been moderately successful. The leading rule for a lawyer, as for the man of every other calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for to-morrow which can be done to-day. Never let your correspondence fall behind. Whatever piece of business you have in hand, before stopping, do all the labour pertaining to it which can then be done. When you bring a common law-suit, if you have the facts for doing so, write the declaration at once. If a law point be involved, examine the books, and note the

authority you rely on upon the declaration itself, where you are sure to find it when wanted. The same of defences and pleas. In business not likely to be litigated—ordinary collection cases, foreclosures, partitions, and the like—make all examinations of titles, and note them and even draft orders and decrees in advance. The course has a triple advantage; it avoids omissions and neglect, saves your labour when once done, performs the labour out of court when you have leisure, rather than in court when you have not.

Extemporaneous speaking should be practised and cultivated. It is the lawyer's avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech. And yet there is not a more fatal error to young lawyers than relying too much on speech-making. If any one, upon his rare powers of speaking, shall claim an exemption from the drudgery of the law, his case is a failure in advance.

Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbours to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser—in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peace-maker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.

Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife, and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.

The matter of fees is important, far beyond the mere question of bread and butter involved. Properly attended to, fuller justice is done to both lawyer and client. An exorbitant fee should never be claimed. As a general rule, never take your whole fee in advance, nor any more than a small retainer. When fully paid beforehand, you are more than a common

mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case as if something was still in prospect for you, as well as for your client. And when you lack interest in the case the job will very likely lack skill and diligence in the performance. Settle the amount of fee and take a note in advance. Then you will feel that you are working for something, and you are sure to do your work faithfully and well. Never sell a fee-note—at least not before the consideration service is performed. It leads to negligence and dishonesty—negligence by losing interest in the case, and dishonesty in refusing to refund when you have allowed the consideration to fail.

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest. I say vague, because when we consider to what extent confidence and honours are reposed in and conferred upon lawyers by the people, it appears improbable that their impression of dishonesty is very distinct and vivid. Yet the impression is common, almost universal. Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief. Resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation, rather than one in the choosing of which you do, in advance, consent to be a knave.

A Fragment on Free and Slave Labor. Written about July 1, 1854

Three years after this fragment was written, Helper's book, which was used as a campaign document by the Republicans in the Presidential contest of 1860, was published. It showed that poor white labor in the South was greatly handicapped by the existence of slave labor. In these few sentences, Lincoln distills the economic philosophy of a prosperous laboring class for any age.

Equality in society alike beats inequality, whether the latter be of the British aristocratic sort or of the domestic slavery sort.

We know Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired labourers amongst us. How little they know whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired labourers amongst us. Twenty-five years ago I was a hired labourer. The hired labourer of yesterday labours on his own account to-day, and will hire others to labour for him to-morrow.

Advancement—improvement in condition—is the order of things in a society of equals. As labour is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden on to the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race. Originally a curse for transgression upon the whole race, when, as by slavery, it is concentrated on a part only, it becomes the double-refined curse of God upon his creatures.

Free labour has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful. The slave-master himself has a conception of it, and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will task him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope for the rod.

And yet perhaps it does not occur to you that, to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system and adopted the free system of labour.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The literature on Abraham Lincoln is voluminous. Only those books regarded as most important for the purposes of this study of his contribution to English prose can be mentioned. Foremost of all is "Abraham Lincoln: A History," by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, the President's private secretaries, and "The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln," compiled by the same authors and published by The Century Company, 1894. Mention should be made also of the Gettysburg edition of the "Complete Works," published by the Francis D. Tandy Co., 1895. The "Works of Abraham Lincoln" (in eight volumes) is published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. The Lincoln-Douglas Debates are to be found in a well edited edition by E. E. Sparks, published by the Illinois State Historical Society, 1908; a valuable edition of the Debates with an introduction by George Haven Putnam is published by Putnam's (1912).

Of the numerous biographial studies of Lincoln, the "Short Life of Abraham Lincoln," by John G. Nicolay is among the best (The Century Company). The latest edition of the two-volume Life by Ida M. Tarbell (The Macmillan Company, 1917), contains new material compiled by the author for the first edition and a prefatory study of new Lincoln material which has come to light since that edition was published in 1900. Other good lives of Lincoln are by Noah Brooks (Putnam's, 1894); by Francis F. Browne (Putnam's, 1913), and the very brief life by Brand Whitlock (Small, Maynard & Co., 1908). There are many others. The best considered study of Lincoln by a foreigner is "Abraham Lincoln," by Lord Charnwood, in the "Makers of the Nineteenth

Century" series (Henry Holt & Co., 1916). The Life by Herndon and Weik (D. Appleton & Co., 1888) is still useful; also the Life by Isaac N. Arnold (A. C. McClurg & Co., 1885). See also Weik's "The Real Lincoln" (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), and the "Cambridge History of American Literature," Vol. III (Putnam's, 1921).

Special studies of importance, among many others, are: "Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time," edited by Allan Thorndyke Rice (New York, 1886); "Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln," by Francis B. Carpenter—an indispensable source book (New York, 1866); "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln," by Henry C. Whitney (Boston, 1892); "Lincoln, the Lawyer," by Frederick T. Hill (The Century Co., 1906); "Abraham Lincoln, the Lawyer-Statesman," by John T. Richards (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916); "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln," by Henry B. Rankin (Putnam's, 1916). Other references are to be found in the text of the present volume.

Many valuable essays have been written on Lincoln and his style of expression. Special mention should be made of "Lincoln, the Leader," by Richard Watson Gilder (Houghton Mifflin Co.) and the notable estimates by Emerson, Lowell, Schurz, and Choate.

For the history of the period in which Lincoln's life fell, no more illuminating and authoritative account can be found than that given in James Ford Rhodes's "History of the United States," 1850-1877 (The Macmillan Co.), and in the same author's "History of the Civil war" (1917).

NOTE ON ILLUSTRATIONS

The four pictures in this volume, as far as the author is aware, receive here their initial publication in a volume on Lincoln.

The frontispiece is reproduced from an etching by Joseph Pierre Nuyttens, the Belgian-American painter and etcher. Mr. Nuyttens has portrayed with remarkable fidelity the spiritual appearance of Lincoln as he matured under the weight of his great responsibility.

The photograph of the O'Connor statue (facing page 64) was furnished for this volume by the Illinois Centennial Commission. This statue, which stands in front of the Capitol at Springfield, Illinois, was unveiled October 6, 1918. Lord Charnwood of England made the dedicatory address.

The Bartlett picture (facing page 192) is from a photograph of a bronze statuette of the President, made by Truman A. Bartlett and exhibited by him in Paris in 1877.

The "Masters Portrait" (facing page 128) is believed to be one of the best of Lincoln taken before the debates with Douglas. This portrait has an interesting history, which is told in the following words by The Masters Studio of Princeton, Illinois:

"On July Fourth, 1856, Princeton celebrated Independence Day in spread eagle style. Mr. Lincoln, of Springfield, Mr. Knox, of Rock Island, Owen Lovejoy and George W. Stipp, of Princeton, were the speakers of the day.

"Mr. Lincoln was entertained by Dr. S. A. Paddock. After dinner Mrs. Paddock asked Mr. Lincoln to sit for a picture for her. To this he consented, and they visited the studio of W. H. Masters, where this char-

acteristic portrait was made. Mr. Lincoln inquired if his hair was all right and sat for the picture without further preparation, except to run his fingers through his hair, with the result shown in the portrait.

"About 1872 Mrs. Paddock loaned the original picture to C. H. Masters, who had a large portrait made from it. Before her death Mrs. Paddock gave the original picture to Robert Lincoln.

"Mr. S. G. Paddock, a brother of Dr. Paddock, who is now living in Princeton and was on the Committee on Grounds at the time, says this statement is correct, according to his recollection."

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